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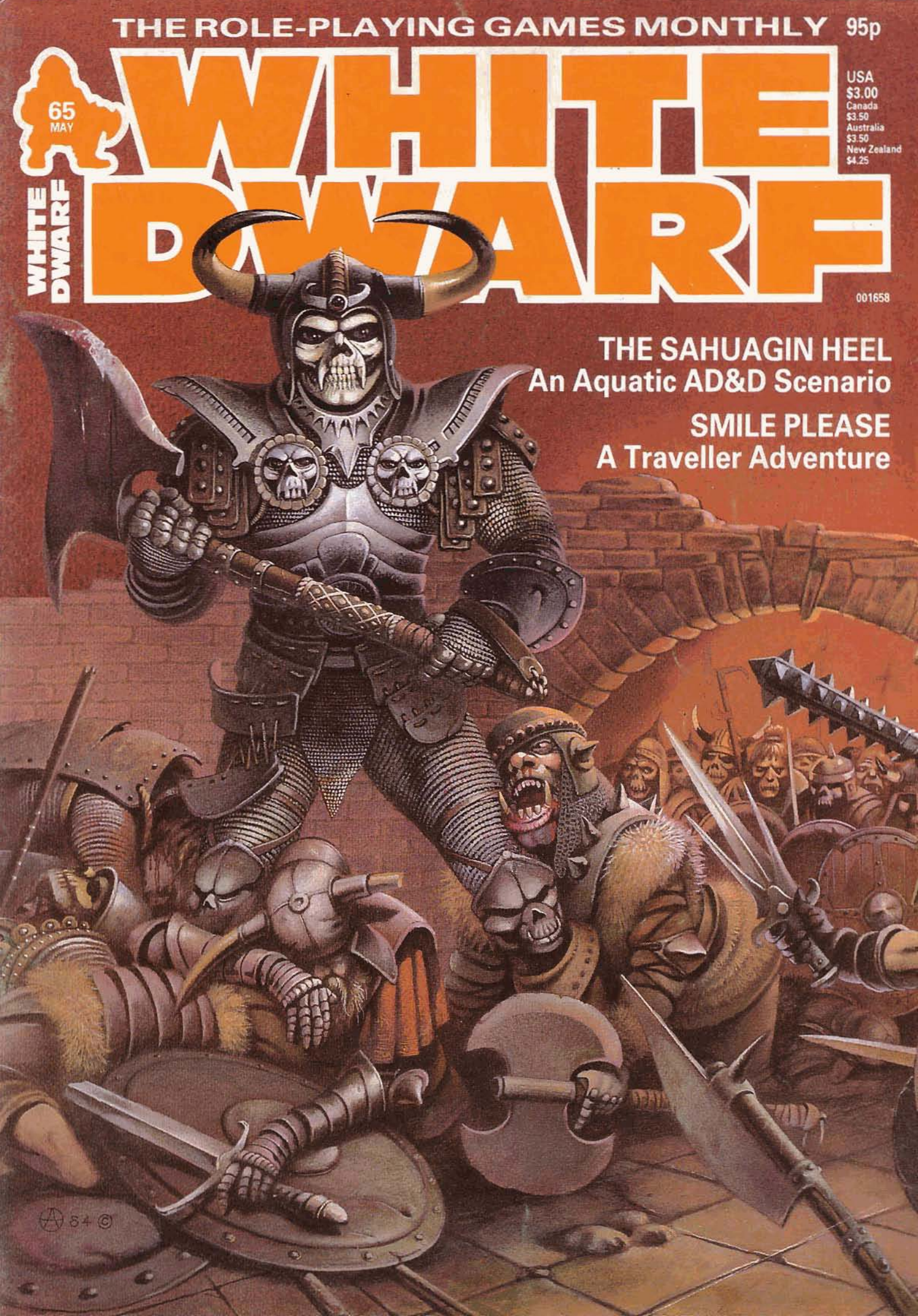

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PUBLISHER: Games Workshop Ltd
Printed in England
All correspondence should be addressed to *White Dwarf*, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10 6JP.

Despite there being a slight decline in fantasy gaming in the USA, the rest of the world is busy getting into it. (And it's only the fickle mass market in the USA that are tired of it; the hobby is still strong). There are now German, French and Spanish editions of *D&D*, 15 foreign language editions of the *Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks* in the pipeline, a German edition of *Talisman* soon to be released, French *Call of Cthulhu* and lots more activity around the world.

Why does fantasy gaming have worldwide appeal? There are such different mythologies existing in the various countries and yet a common gaming fantasy prevails.

I wonder if *White Dwarf* will ever be published in Papua New Guinea?

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Please send and make remittance payable to: *Games Workshop Ltd*, 27/29 Sunbeam Rd, London NW10 6JP. Tel: 01 965 3713. *White Dwarf* is published monthly. Annual subscription rates are: **UK - £11.00; Europe - £22.00; other overseas surface - £22.00; other overseas airmail - £33.00; USA** - contact *Games Workshop US*, 9110F Redbranch Road, Columbia, MD 21045, USA, 301 964 0262.

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ISSN 0265-8712.

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THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DOWNRIGHT ODD

Non-Player Characters in Superhero RPGs by Phil Masters

INTRODUCTION

Superhero role-playing games are built around a fairly simple idea: characters are possessed of skills or powers far beyond the human norm, and use these in combat with individuals or organisations of comparable or greater power, usually taking the side of law, justice and right against crime and evil. The setting is usually (not always) contemporary Earth; the problems frequently involve threats to whole cities, if not planets.

All of this makes matters sound delightfully uncomplicated, which could be dangerous, because simple games are frequently boring and uninspiring. Fortunately, this need not be the case; the life of a character able to surpass a hundred ordinary mortals can be complicated indeed. After all, it is well known that all super-beings have their problems and weaknesses; powers and beings exist who can defeat the most powerful or subvert the strongest willed. But such forces are only dangerous if some being exists who can turn them against player characters, and this is where the non-player character comes in as the referee's tool to create situations to worry and interest the players. Note that there is much more involved than simply deploying supervillains capable of defeating the heroes; amusing as the occasional stand-up, knock-down super-battle can be there is a whole world to create, populated by a variety of beings, some good, some evil, and an awful lot somewhere in between . . .

If that picture sounds too much like reality, then this is good. The fun thing about setting up a superhero game is that it can be very easy, because the world *need* not be very different from our own. The difference that does exist is that everything is a little bit larger than life – and that can mean that the villains are nastier (or at least tougher), the heroes more heroic, and the moral ambiguities are more ambiguous.

In such a world, there is obviously a place for some rather special non-player characters – which does not simply mean villains. If player character superheroes can exist, then so, logically, can non-player 'goodies' (otherwise the players may feel they are fighting a lonely and unbalanced war). Most interestingly, so can ambiguous, retiring, or confused super-beings, not out-and-out criminals but certainly not upstanding crime-fighters either. To begin with, however, let us look at those much-abused, little-loved creatures, the villains.

MAD, BAD, AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW

One over-simplification that I find useful when looking at super-villains is to divide them into two categories; 'leaders' and 'thugs'. The difference is largely a matter of attitude, and the two groups often overlap, but the terms do describe two different and important approaches to super-crime. 'Thugs' are simply criminally-inclined beings who happen to possess super-powers, and so can commit bigger, more profitable, and more enjoyable crimes; a sub-group are the eccentric individuals who use their powers in pursuit of particular illegal ends, such as revenge on hated enemies, random slaughter, or theft of spare parts for a damaged spaceship. Such individuals differ widely, but they are usually marked out by the fact that if they want anything important done, they do it themselves. They may occasionally hire underlings for complicated jobs, and quite often team up into impromptu villain groups, but they lack *either* the motivation *or* the social skills for major long-term projects. Some thugs are determinedly independent ('I serve no cause, no law, and no man'), some are freelance mercenaries, and some work for a single boss or organisation, but one who sets up on his own has graduated to 'leader' status. Thugs are the opposition against whom the heroes have their more serious routine fights, but on their own they do not provide much of a storyline, for plots are the business of the leaders.

The term 'leader' may in fact be a little misleading; the chief point about this category is that its members work much more towards long-term than short-term aims, and it is possible to do so without using other beings; however, most 'leaders' have some agents in their employ. Leaders are not necessarily particularly powerful individuals; they do not have to be, because they generally tend to avoid fights. This is not because they are all cowards, but because a leader is smart enough to know that any fight could possibly go against them, and that being in jail is very bad for one's long-term masterplan. Futhermore, the cleverest leaders carefully avoid leaving clues that could link themselves personally to any crime, and getting into fights tends to diminish their chances of maintaining an innocent front. The *Marvel* comics character the *Kingpin* is a classic example of this supremely subtle type of leader, who can make very frustrating opponents for honest, rigorously law-abiding heroes, but the type goes back a long way; remember Sherlock Holmes' comment to Watson; 'In calling Moriarty a criminal you are uttering libel in the eyes of the law, and there lies the glory and wonder of it'.

Leaders vary widely in style and motivation: faceless bosses of criminal agent groups whose hierarchy could take game-years to penetrate, crimelords who dominate the underworlds of single cities, charismatic leaders of small but fanatical secret societies controlling professional mercenary/assassin teams, generals in invading alien armies and demon princes seeking to enslave the mortal world to name but a few. Sometimes, very small groups appear who serve a minor leader who operates as a sort of thug; remember *Daredevil's* opponent *Slaughter*, co-ordinator of a small gang of skilled hit-men, or the *Mad Thinker* and his robots. These are probably the only leaders whom heroes can hope to defeat for good and all, for real master criminals always leave themselves get-outs and escape routes, and rarely die when they seem to ('The World shall hear from me again!').

The one thing that can make any villain – thug or leader – interesting is a motive. Of course, money, power, and fun are always attractive to ruthless beings, but sometimes there is more than that. Revenge on individuals or society can be another force, but the most complex possibility is for a criminal to be working towards ends with which the heroes can identify, but using unjustifiable means. A classic example from the comics is *Magneto*, who so fears what humanity might do to the increasing number of mutants in the world that he has repeatedly sought to conquer the Earth, often opposing the mutant *X-Men* (who defend mutants against normal humanity and normal humanity against renegade mutants). In recent *X-Men* stories, *Magneto* has been forcibly reminded of his own humanity, while the *X-Men* have faced growing anti-mutant prejudice, and the result has been to make *Magneto* a more interesting and ambiguous figure. In such cases, the *real* heroes may have to think more than fight.

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE . . .

The concept of a 'patron' comes from the SF game *Traveller*, but I have found it useful in superhero gaming as well. In another context, the word has been defined as meaning 'a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery', but in *Traveller* the idea has been stretched to cover any being who shows the player characters some way of pursuing their ends, and so leads them into the plot of the adventure. In superhero gaming, I use it rather more narrowly, to cover non-player characters who assist the party in some way, but inevitably extract some kind of price – usually help and assistance – for doing so. The point about such characters is that they give the referee a direct line of communication to the party, and allow players to be provided with information that they might not otherwise logically obtain, or even gadgets or personal assistance demanded by some scenario – in the last resort. The obvious type of patron is the commander of some law-enforcement organisation – UNTIL, SHIELD, STOP, or suchlike – which habitually calls for assistance from superheroes when faced with extreme problems; characters who demand some return on the deal are acting out of normal hero character, but they can be offered semi-official status, forgiveness for the property damage their activities often cause, and just occasionally fire support from agents when they can convince the organisation that a situation warrants it. Personally, however, I find a 'private individual' patron more interesting, and my own campaign features one such – 'The Watchmaker' – who may be taken as fairly typical. The point about such a character is that he or she shares many of the typical hero objectives and attitudes, but either lacks the power and skill to function as a hero, or feels that much more good can be done by organising others to achieve the noble ends. Such a character is analogous to the 'criminal mastermind', but has very different objectives. Such patrons may sometimes get involved in fights, but this should be avoided, as a patron who is much weaker than the heroes will simply act as a vulnerable liability, and one who is in the same league may be seen as stealing the heroes' thunder; the true function of the patron emerges *between* fights. For example, the Watchmaker is a retired gadgeteer-hero, who is now too old and frail to get mixed up in battles, but who retains his heroic idealism. His base (a laboratory, computer and communications centre) is hidden under a rather tatty shop in the East End of London, and from it he monitors a wide, if uncertain, assortment of computer networks and radio transmissions. His bugging skills and detective work – plus his incurable nosiness – ensure that he knows most things about the heroes, including their secret identities, and he has contacted the player characters and provided all of them with radio-receivers built into innocuous-looking watches. When he is available, these can can be used for co-ordinating the team, and he and his computer can provide many useful snippets of data. However, he is sometimes irascible and difficult to deal with, and he is much given to calling the heroes up at inconvenient moments and informing them of some unsolved crime or mystery he feels they ought to be dealing with. In short, he provides me with a way of starting adventures and passing snippets to the heroes, while giving just enough in return to keep the party interested.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Non-player, non-patron heroes are also possible and reasonable features of a campaign, but they should be used with care. If, for example, the heroes have managed to get themselves trapped by their enemies, who are frankly too smart to provide easy let-outs, a non-player superhero, perhaps summoned by a patron, can always charge in and help them out. Two interesting variations on this are to make the NPC heroes not immediately identifiable as such (as another costumed figure charges in, the party moan 'Oh no, more opposition – we're losing already!'), and to set up NPCs who seem to act against the interests of the party – or the world in general. A hero who discovers a strange, super-powered figure, apparently beating up random innocent bystanders, is not to know that this is a telepathic hero identifying and dealing with shape-shifting alien invaders. Such confusions can lead to a degree of animosity between player and non-player heroes, which is no bad thing so long as it does not get out of hand; one character in my campaign once spotted two figures fighting outside a building that was due to be robbed, guessed wrong, and found that he had helped a villain to escape *and* made a minor enemy of a very capable superheroine, who subsequently rubbed salt in the wound by saving his life in a later fight!

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

All superhero stories are about power. Heroes have to learn how to handle their power; villains abuse theirs. This leaves an interesting and little-explored 'grey area': the beings who fit in neither category – or both.

An extreme example that should logically appear more often that it does is the being who thinks that use of their power carries too many attendant risks, or that it is in some other way undesirable. After all, if there are a certain number of aliens, mutants, sorcerers, lab accident victims and suchlike in the world, a proportion of that number are going to feel that crime is immoral and dangerous, heroism is very dangerous, and a quiet life is inherently the best choice. That is not too say that every super-fight should involve an innocent bystander suddenly producing a force field when a stray energy blast comes his way. As with any other good theme, this should not be over-exploited, else it will lose its freshness, but no referee should ignore a potential plotline.

The reason that so few super-beings are inactive is, perhaps, that power is addictive as well as useful. Remembering this leads to other possibilities: the aging hero who refuses to give up the life and who gets in the heroes' way, the bumbling scientists whose villainous schemes would surely destroy the player characters if his gadgets didn't keep failing, and so on. Of course, some heroes only use their powers when their friends and loved ones are directly threatened by villainy, but this is a matter of player character design and motivation – and one that should be controlled, as no campaign can function if every story has to begin with one of the characters being persuaded to fight (comics built on this idea exist, but are as distorted by it as games will be). None of this, incidentally should be confused with the situation of the subtle, quiet, or philosophical character who never shows off and only uses *as much* power as is needed to achieve a desired end.

Some characters exist who use superpowers to achieve ends rather different from those of the crime-busting hero or greedy villain. A simple example is that of the visiting super-human alien whose behaviour arises out of non-human psychology, but equally well-known are such cases as demigods and high-power magicians who act on whim ('I will give you two blessings and one curse'), and the fanatical avenger whose only concern is to defeat some group or individual, quite possibly villainous or evil, by means so violent that the 'namby-pamby' heroes must try and restrain him or her ('I know that these men are hoodlums, but will you *please stop killing people*!'). Such oddities can force the heroes to think before they act, which can only make the game more interesting, and is only right; the whole point about super-NPCs is that they force players to accept that, powerful as their characters are, they exist in an equally powerful environment. With great power comes great responsibility, and with great responsibility comes great headaches; when the great power is somebody else's, the complications are even worse. □

In Open Box, *science fiction and fantasy games and accessories are reviewed by independent authorities.*

OPEN BOX

PARANOIA
West End Games **£19.95**

Most RPG's advise the the referee to be an impartial arbiter, weighing the odds to ensure that player characters have a reasonable chance of survival and assume that the players will probably succeed most of the time. *Paranoia* is a little different.

Paranoia takes the basic back-stabbing concepts of *Killer* and *Illuminati*, and converts them into a role-playing game set against a post-holocaust society ruled by an omnipotent (and hopelessly insane) computer. The background is loathsomely unpredictable, and 'allies' can be far deadlier than enemies. Players can be found guilty of treason by thought, by deed, by omission, by acquisition of illegal skills, by accident of birth, or by the malice and actions of other players. Every character has a secret mutant ability, belongs to a secret society, and lives in dread of The Computer.

Game mechanics are simple, but ask more of the referee than many RPG's. All player characters are troubleshooters for The Computer, and must destroy its enemies. However, almost any sort of action can be construed as treason to The Computer. Good actions (killing traitors, recovering the property of The Computer, and exposing spies) earn Commendation points. Bad actions (asking too many questions, arguing with superiors, losing equipment, and virtually anything The Computer dislikes) earn Treason points. Characters with at least ten more Treason points than Commendation points are liquidated and replaced by clones. The referee must keep track of these points throughout the campaign, but must never reveal them to the players. This makes it difficult to run open games, or campaigns with more than one referee. NPC's, especially superior officers, tend to liquidate characters for arbitrary or imagined offenses, as well as for treason. The only rewards for success are Commendation points, which earn improved security levels and give access to better equipment and skills.

Actions are resolved by percentile dice rolls against skills, though throws against characteristics may be used instead. Combats are resolved by the referee, who is supposed to make fights as confusing and lethal as possible. The combat system ignores most normal wargaming concepts, concentrating on flamboyance and the speed with which the players respond to the situation the referee describes. There are mechanisms for skill improvement, advancement in secret societies, and sundry other aspects of life in the wonderful world of The Computer. However, this information is all supposed to be a closely guarded secret of the referee. Even the exact cause of the holocaust is a secret, though the Computer claims that Communists were to blame. However, The Computer is insane . . .

The game box contains three books (one for players, two for the referee, a total of 140 pages including a sample adventure) plus two percentile dice and an errata sheet. All are well presented, and tables needed by the referee and players are duplicated where necessary. Box and internal art are very funny, though some illustrations are repeated several times with different captions.

I like *Paranoia*, but I'm not sure that I'd want to run it as a prolonged campaign. It's the sort of concept which works well as light relief from a 'serious' RPG campaign, and will definitely appeal to 'hack and slay' merchants. Dedicated rule lawyers and wargamers will hate it. Overall, a lot of fun for a minimum of three or four players.

Presentation:	**8**	**Rules:**	**7**
Playability:	**8**	**Complexity:**	**5**
Enjoyment:	**9**	**Overall:**	**7**

Marcus L Rowland

ASLAN, ALIEN MODULE 1 **£7.95**
K'KREE, ALIEN MODULE 2 **£7.95**
VARGR, ALIEN MODULE 3 **£7.95**
Game Designers' Workshop

These modules are part of a new colour-subjects of these items have been raised before – mainly in the *TAS Journal* – but never in so much detail. Veteran *Traveller* consumers need not fear that all they are getting is old material in new packaging. Each module may be used with any of the versions of the *Traveller* rules.

I have a particular interest in *Aslan*, since they inhabit much of my own campaign area. For the most part I was not disappointed with *Aslan* ('Adventure and Intrigue with a Proud Warrior Race'). Naturally I could have done with even more social and historical background than is provided, but what you get inside the folder-type cover is a 40-page booklet jam-packed with detail. It covers Aslan character generation (not just standard *Traveller* but also *Mercenary* and *High Guard* expanded procedures), physical details, history, society and so on, and full procedures for generating Aslan names and worlds. There are extremely useful sections on playing and refereeing Aslan, plus some ships and equipment (mostly weapons) types. There are lots of tables and the cover includes a map of Aslan space plus excellent anatomical drawings. Lastly (and least in my opinion) there is an adventure which seems meandering and overly ambitious given that the aim is to introduce players to the Aslan.

K'Kree ('Encounters with the Enigmatic Centaurs') is in the same format to the same level of detail, though adapted to different requirements. K'Kree are more 'alien' than Aslan; that is, the Aslan are closer in behaviour and outlook to (though by no means the same as) humans. A K'Kree player would ideally be a vegetarian living in an outdoor commune, since meat-eaters and confined spaces are bad news to a K'Kree and the player has to cope with role-playing a whole family and retinue who act in concert along fairly predictable and role-specialised lines. Playing K'Kree well would demand a lot from the player, and I would recommend some experience (perhaps with Vargr or Aslan) is needed before attempting to play one. Three adventures are provided and together they form a much better introduction (than with *Aslan*). However, they take place in different parts of the *GDW* universe so continuity is a problem unless they are treated purely as a learning experience.

I've saved the best until last since, in my opinion, *Vargr* (the most recent release) is the best all round play aid since the *Traveller Adventure*. Following the pattern set in *Aslan* and *K'Kree*, the physiology, sociology, politics, languages and career generation procedures constitute most of the volume. Inside the front cover are the now usual anatomical studies, which brings me to a slight criticism that the studies, text, and cover illustrations seem to disagree on details.

Although the format is similar to the first two modules the likeness ends here. The introductory adventure material is much superior to the earlier products not only in content, which includes an excursion into language translation and interpretation and data on the Gvurrdon sector immediately to coreward of the Spinward Marches, but also in its suitability as an introduction to the Vargr. In all, highly recommended especially to a player group nearing the end of the plot in the *Traveller Adventure* or other Spinward Marches campaigns.

	Aslan	**K'Kree**	**Vargr**
Presentation:	**7**	**7**	**8**
Enjoyment:	**9**	**7**	**9**
Complexity:	**8**	**8**	**8**
Rules:	**7**	**7**	**8**
Overall:	**9**	**7**	**9**

Bob McWilliams

THE ROMULANS **£10.95**
THE ORION RUSE **£6.95**
MARGIN OF PROFIT **£6.95**
FASA

Both *Margin of Profit* and *The Orion Ruse* are designed to be used in conjunction with the supplement *Trader Captains and Merchant Princess*. In *Margin of Profit* the merchant aspect of the game remains in the background. The characters enter into a deal at the beginning and the plot unfolds from that point. It could well be used as an introduction to a merchant campaign, since although it is based around a merchant deal, no real merchant orientated decisions have to be taken by the players. Full details of a 9 man crew are provided and these can either be used for the scenario or replaced with a player's own character; if nothing else they are a guide to what *FASA* think a merchant crew should look like.

The Orion Ruse is different in that negotiating a trade agreement forms a fundamental part of the plot. Another

basic part is that the players are split into 2 teams, one of Star Fleet personnel and the other of merchants. Both teams essentially have different objectives, but they need the help of the other team to achieve it. Thus as the scenario unfolds not only are the players interacting with NPC's but they are also cajoling, threatening and dealing with each other. I found the idea very interesting and will definitely use it as the basis for a campaign, with Star Fleet and merchant characters working together.

The booklets themselves are presented in the same sequence as previous *Star Trek* scenarios, with the 2nd edition giving the main details of what takes place. Perhaps the easiest way of describing this is if you imagine the scenario as a television episode with titled chapters describing each scene. As play proceeds you simply skip to the appropriate scene.

At the beginning of the booklet is an overview of the plot, and at the back are the NPC stats, background information on worlds etc, followed by the maps and the designers notes to the GM.

All in all it is pretty comprehensive, but nevertheless you will need to ad lib at various times. The scenarios are puzzles which are investigated, rather than a series of fights and traps in keyed rooms. So if the players go wrong in their investigations and, say, decide to raid the home of the foreman who last serviced the engines of some ship or other, it is extremely unlikely the scenario will have any details to cover this. After all, it covers the details of the *correct* trail, and can't cover every possible false trail the players might follow. Hint, if you look carefully at the background and the designer's notes before you start, this will usually get you out of trouble. Don't hesitate too long while you think up something, otherwise the players will guess they are on the wrong track because there are no details in the book about it.

The *FASA* supplement *The Romulans* is the follow-up to the *Klingon* supplement. Personally *FASA* have my sympathy; it must be really tricky to write a supplement when in the next movie the director might contradict the whole thing. Take the Klingons for instance, there are now three different types and they have been given the most advanced Romulan ship available complete with cloaking device. The Romulans, don't forget, were so fanatical about military secrets that no Romulan had ever been seen, never mind captured, until Captain Kirk achieved it. Then *FASA* has to write a supplement which allows for this totally illogical occurrence, and they have done a pretty good job as well.

It includes all the details needed to generate Romulan player characters or personality NPC's, following the same format as in the basic *Star Trek* rules. There is background history and a map of the Star Empire, details of Romulan life, government and religion, and a starship recognition file. The map includes the location of a few worlds, and a world log for these are printed. However with the exception of one planet, all of the others do not have any local races on them. The starship recognition file consists of drawings of ships, including shuttles, and a description of them. This description, for example, would be about a ship's origin and use, but not speed or armament. There is also a players' manual giving details of the Romulan Empire that Star Fleet Intelligence has been deemed to have found out. This details the Romulan personality and equipment, and surprisingly, most but not all the details about the Romulan ships that would be needed to run them. This fragmentation of the rules, with some details withheld from players and some from the GM, follows the same format as the basic rule books. For instance in the original books, combat ranges and damage are in book 1, the descriptions are in book 2, and the modifiers are in book 3. Incidentally if you haven't found them yet, the wide angle stun combat modifiers aren't in the combat section, they are under Equipment Use, sub-section Sidearms. The flicking between rule books isn't difficult to master, just irritating.

All in all if you want to run Romulan characters or a Romulan campaign, then this is for you. My only reservation is that for the money I would expect a little more in the way of details on subjects such as ships, worlds, etc.

	Romulans	Orion Ruse	Margin of Profit
Presentation:	9	9	9
Value:	6	8	8
Clarity:	7	8	8
Overall:	8	9	8

R Jarnor

Critical Mass *is a regular fantasy and science fiction book review column, written by Dave Langford. This month he contracts . . .*

Spring Fever

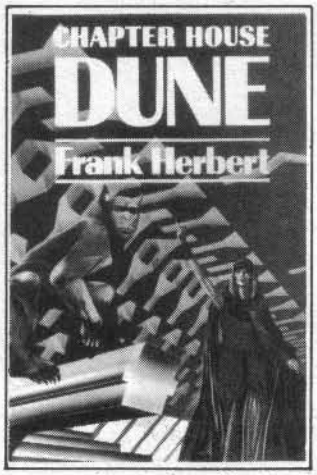
Spring publications are spawning frantically, gaudy jackets peeping shyly through the rank soil of W H Smith's. My heap of review books has put on terrifying spurts of growth, and as it topples to crush me, every title seems in my fear-crazed eyes to be by Frank Herbert . . .

NEL reissued *Dune* with the film, followed by uniform editions of *Dune Messiah* [222pp £2.25], *Children of Dune* [380pp £2.50], *God-Emperor of Dune* [454pp £2.95] and *Heretics of Dune* [508pp £2.95]. Not to be outdone, *Gollancz* offer *Chapter House Dune* [379pp £8.95]. I've just read the lot – *Guinness Book of Records,* please note. *Dune* stands up well despite suety wodges of metaphysics: its mix of simple adventure with complex religion and ecology still appeals. *Messiah* (unusually for SF) effectively tackles the sleazy aftermath of victory; but *Children* seemed chaotic and silly, with Leto's superman transformation pulled rabbit-fashion from the author's hat. *God-Emperor* swung to the opposite extreme: very controlled, thoughtful, boring, a long book whose sparse action is entirely dictated by omniscient God Emperor Leto (who's spent a fun 3500 years turning into a sandworm).

Heretics shows Herbert back on form, with power blocs manoeuvring and stabbing one another enthusiastically in the back: ruthless but worthy Reverend Mothers, despicable Tleilaxu with obscene 'tanks' for growing gholas (clones to you), megalomaniac Honoured Matres (a new, vicious lot) conditioning mere men to sexual addiction, Ixians perfecting high-tech 'no-rooms' and 'no-ships' invisible to the prophetic power now owned by every third character . . . The old excitement returns, with cryptic, subtle conversations as deadly as duels, and some well-timed new revelations. A *deus ex machina* saves the plot as with *Children,* but less egregiously.

Chapter House is a direct sequel – no millennial gulfs as between *Children, God-Emperor* and *Heretics.* Dune itself has been wasted; likewise the worms (all but one), and Tleilaxu (all but one – his irrelevant presence is a minor blemish, a major pointer to Book 7). It's a straight fight between Reverend Mothers (driven underground) and the now omni-dominant Honoured Matres. The hyper-acute characters are impressive, the resolution thoughtful and humane. Though initially I gave up after *Children, Heretics* and *Chapter House* have partially Restored My Faith.

Another series I missed is David Eddings' 'Belgariad' – didn't get any review copies, did I? Until now: *Enchanters' End Game* [*Corgi* 372pp £1.95]. Spies tell me that despite corny passages and an excessively naive hero, this is a fitting close to an OK series. Not so OK is *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* by Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman and a cast of thousands [*TSR* 447pp £2.25], inspired by an *AD&D* campaign full of chunks ripped bleeding from Tolkien. The blurb says it all: 'The first fantasy novel from the people who know fantasy best – *TSR,* Inc'. Considering the relationship of games to books, this is a bit like 'The first country landscape from the people who know open-cast mining best'. Deadly predictable questing, with stock *D&D* characters in familiar encounters: nearly as bad as *Valley of the Four Winds* . . . (Some of the poetry is of McGonagall standard: 'Through his doomed veins the horizon burst', etc). Couldn't finish this one.



Three more fantasies offer their tender throats to the reviewer's knife. Tolkien's *Book of Lost Tales 1* [*Unwin* 297pp £2.95] is paperbacked at last: addicts and scholars will greet it with delight, and probably bought the hardback anyway. I personally am less keen on these rough drafts than on the final, polished *Silmarillion*; casual readers who found even that a bit rarefied will wonder what the fuss is about.

The Bishop's Heir is Katherine Kurtz's latest Deryni book [*Century* 345pp £2.95], beginning a third trilogy of alternate-Welsh magic, romance and politics. The magic is low-key – pyrotechnics, first aid and occasional long-distance phone calls, barely relevant to the conventional mediaeval intrigue and rebellion. (What poetic force there is centres not on magic but on mundane ecclesiastical ritual.) Overall: a straight historical novel in plastic fantasy disguise. Brutally inconclusive ending, two sequels to follow . . . Interesting but patchy.

Ladyhawke by Joan Vinge is a film novelization in two editions: *Piccolo* [169pp £1.50] and *Pan* (photo-cover; probably higher price). A simple story, told with a light touch: irrepressible young thief and drunken monk assist doomed lovers (he turned to a wolf by night, she to a hawk by day) against evil bishop. (Kurtz has whole synods of evil bishops, and *TSR* featured an evil High Theocrat: should the Archbishop of Canterbury worry about this?) Have fun spotting the obligatory film clichés – as when someone's running, hotly pursued, down an empty road; stumbles and falls; finds himself staring at mere inches' range at the boots (here hooves) of a previously unnoticed stranger . . . But Vinge's clear, witty writing makes up for much.

Interzone: the 1st Anthology [*Dent* 206pp £3.95] is what it says: a first sampler of fiction from the most exciting and ambitious SF magazine in Britain, or the world. *Interzone* can also make hugely exciting and ambitious mistakes, but they too are vital. About the most powerful of these 13 stories (12 reprint, 1 new) was the most hated in a readership poll. If you haven't seen *IZ,* buy this – act without thinking – and use the subscription form provided within.

Piers Anthony strikes again: *Refugee* [*Granada* 333pp £1.95] opens the pentalogy 'Bio of a Space Tyrant'. Bio, Anthony explains, stands for biography, biology, biopsy, 'all the ways to study a subject' – watch for small tissue samples sellotaped into future volumes. I wouldn't put it past him: a sincere and talented author, he *will* overdo things. The hero is Hope Hubris (see what I mean?), doomed to rise through four agonizing sequels to be Tyrant of Jupiter: *Refugee* covers his early trials, consisting of an interplanetary hop during which everything nice is hacked from his life by space pirates. Space pirates have it easy since airlocks don't lock: the pirate merely hauls alongside and boards his victim for several chapters of rape, loot and pillage. So popular is space-piracy that our hero's craft is raped, looted and pillaged no fewer than *eight times* in 333 pages. Crowded place, space . . . There are exciting bits, but Anthony desperately needs editing: his verbosity stretches scenes which should be quick and brutal into reams of increasingly gratuitous violence, which ultimately put me to sleep.

Philosophy and SF [392pp £11.95, from *Prometheus Books,* 10 Crescent View, Loughton, Essex IG10 4PZ] offers 14 stories, one play (Capek's classic *R U R*), two extracts, 30-odd slightly turgid pages of introductory philosophy, and Study Questions: 'What does Borges' story suggest about the nature of truth . . . Do you agree?' Too expensive for most; interesting if you contemplate a philosophy course. Can editor and self-confessed philosopher Michael Philips really not spell hermeneutics? He gets it wrong ten times in two pages.

Bob Shaw's *The Peace Machine* [*Gollancz* 160pp £7.95] revises *Ground Zero Man* (1976), the heart-stopping action-adventure of a man who invents a way to explode every nuclear weapon in the world, and who struggles with the responsibility. Its grim conclusion shows precisely and prophetically (1976, remember) the flaw in today's plans for 'star wars' energy-beam defences. One bit of science does creak: the 'classical nuclear device with two fissionable masses' was superseded *decades* ago. A minor point. Read this one, and tremble. Just as I tremble at the size of the review-copy stack, and grapple with the awesome responsibility of leaving some till next month . . . □

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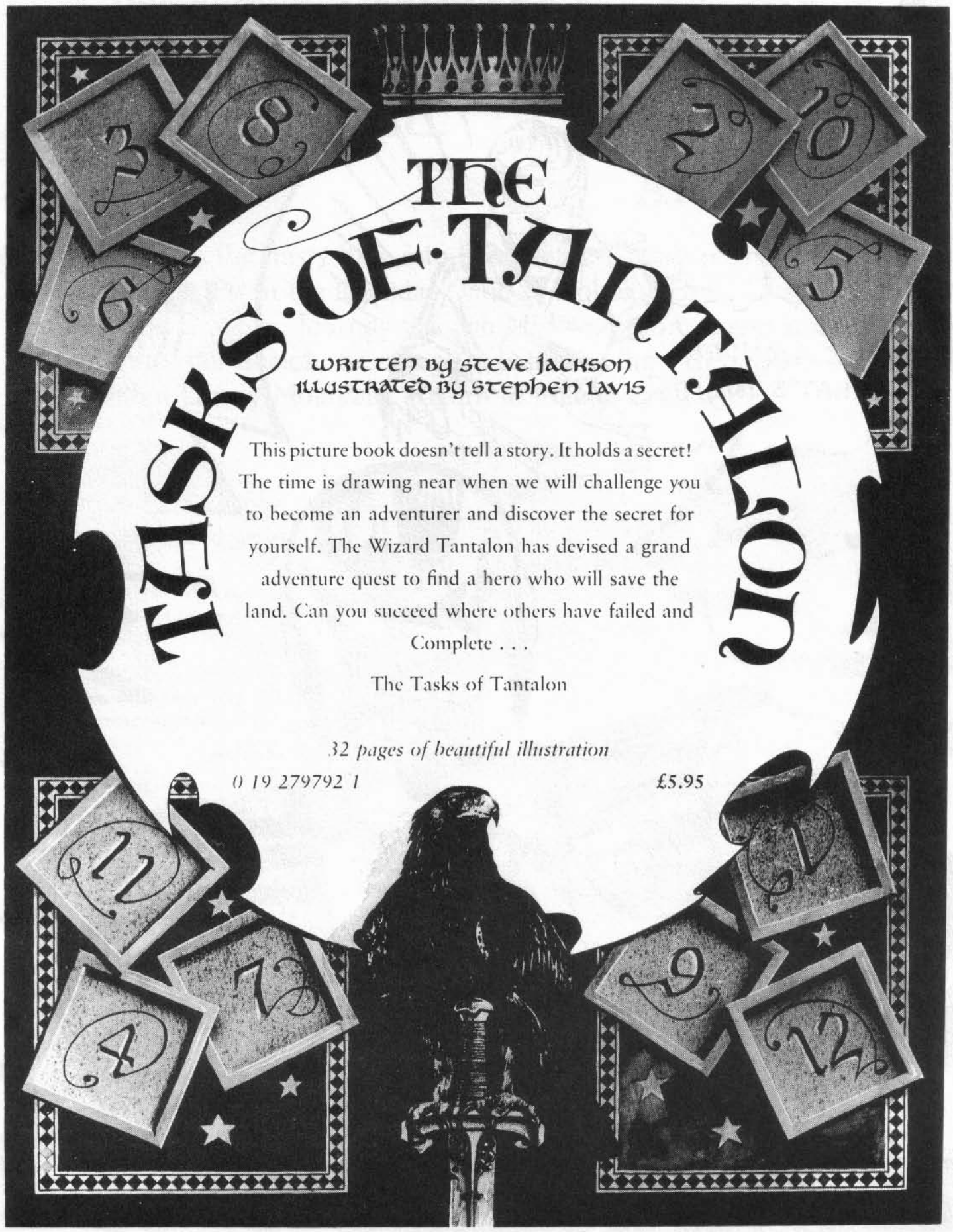

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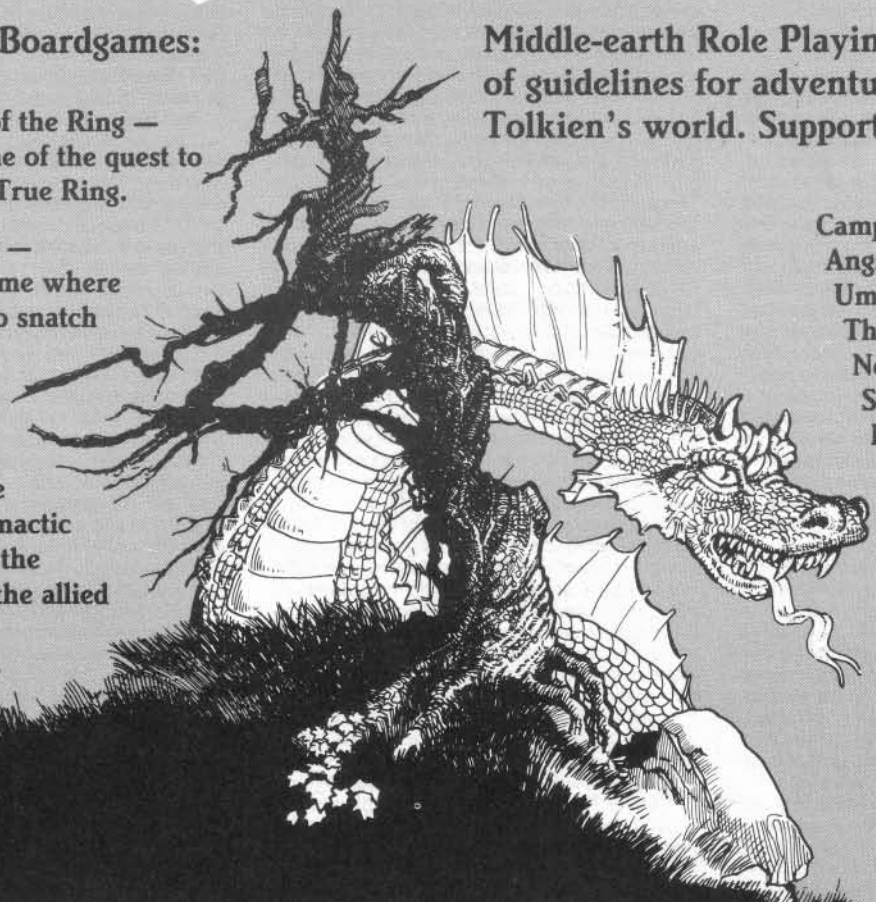

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The Distressing Damsel

A Grimm Tale by Dave Langford

Once upon a time, in a far-off land, there lived a princess who developed an unfortunate social problem.

★

The kingdom of Altrund extended over more square leagues of fertile land than the Court Mathematician could compute. So its King would boast, delaying as long as possible the admission that his Court Mathematician (a retarded youth of fourteen) had yet to fathom the intricacies of the numbers after VIII.

The Mathematician, who also bore the titles of Palace Swineherd and Master of the Buckhound, was the only child of the peasant classes – both members of which seemed discouraged by their first experiment in being ancestors. King Fardel periodically worried that his peasant classes might at any moment die out altogether; and likewise the kingdom's upper middle class, consisting of a decrepit imbiber called Grommet (Grand Vizier, Chancellor of the Palace Exchequer, Wizard Pro-Tem, Steward of the Royal Cellars, Scullion, Seeker of the King's Treasury, *etcetera*). Even the King's own dynasty showed every sign of decay. Twenty years ago he had looked forward to the sedate begetting of three sons, two of whom would do tremendously well in the world while the youngest would somehow contrive to outdo them both and be extraordinarily virtuous in addition. Alas, Queen Kate was a woman of sadly independent mind and womb, and had called a halt to the dynasty after the inconvenience of producing the Princess Fiona. Fardel could only resign himself to the passive role of devising tests, ready to assess the worthiness of the princess who (in threes) must inevitably arrive to seek the hand of his daughter. The King's first thought had been to avoid the formalities of quests and dragons by, quite simply, asking each suitor how old he was: the virtues of the youngest prince in any representative trio were well known. Later it occurred to Fardel that this was *too* well known, and that all but the youngest would undoubtedly lie about their age.

His next experiment had been to station a hideous dwarf on the one road into the valley of Altrund. Only the most morally sound princess would have a kind word for this creature, and thus virtue would be revealed. It failed, however, to be revealed in the dwarf, who took to supplementing his weekly pittance by severely beating and robbing passers by – including, the King was sure, at least one incognito prince. The dwarf had had to be discharged, just as Fiona came to marriageable age with enough princess-like beauty to make the King study his plump Queen with wonder and suspicion. After considering and rejecting a version of the ancient shell game which involved caskets of gold, of silver and of lead, King Fardel sighed and arranged for the construction of a traditional golden road.

Fiona was walking along it now, brooding as usual on her horrid obligation to marry a prince of peculiar virtue. The theory of the golden road was that crasser and more wordly princes would give too much thought to the road's market value, and would discreetely ride along the grassy verge to the left or right; only a prince preoccupied with Fiona's beauty would unconsciously ride down the middle of the road, to victory. How anyone who had not yet reached King Fardel's dilapidated palace could have known so much about Fiona's beauty was not explained by the theory. The princess had never had the heart to point this out, nor to add that, personally, she would incline towards a prince who could be trusted to wipe his boots at the door rather than walk in preoccupied with beauty. Meanwhile the surface of the golden road had suffered the depredations of brigands, jackdaws, itinerant tax collectors and (Fiona was sure, though the King refused to believe it) at least one incognito prince. Tiny gleams of gold could still be seen amid the trampled earth and grass, though only in brilliant sunshine like today's; fewer such gleams were visible in the King's treasury, and Fardel was rumoured to be having second thoughts about crassness and worldliness. Fiona walked down the middle of the formerly golden road and dreamed again of her own ambition, which did not involve princes. She rather wanted to be a witch. 'A plague of frogs', she crooned happily. 'A plague of boils. A plague of toads. That would show them. Princes!'

There was almost no magic in Altrund, apart from the heavily mortgaged magic mirror which was the palace's last valuable asset . . . but a wisp or two of enchantment had been left behind, like forgotten tools, by the obliging Graduate Sorcerer who had polished up the golden road; and perhaps one of these wisps twined itself into Fiona's girlish daydreams of epidemic frogs, boils and toads. Certainly, without her noticing it, her aimless walk swerved off the road, through a clump of trees, through a strand of nettles (which despite her long skirt she did emphatically notice) and finally, to a malodorous pond she had not seen before.

'Be careful!' said a croaking voice from almost underfoot. Princess Fiona recoiled slightly, and stared down at a singularly obnoxious and wart-encrusted toad on the damp grass at the pond's rim. It stared back at her for some moments, breathing heavily. 'Stamping on toads,' it complained at last, 'is not in accordance with Royal protocol.'

'A fig for Royal protocol,' said Fiona airily, though uncertain of precisely what a fig might be.

'Well, get on with it,' said the toad.

'Pardon?'

'Oh dear me, I can see your education has been neglected. Did they never tell you about certain, *erk*, traditions of enchantment?'

Something was indeed beginning to dawn on the princess, who drew still further away. 'Ah,' she said. 'The Acting Royal Governess is a dear old fellow called Grommet, but I don't think he knows very much except about vintages. Suppose I go and ask him, though . . .' She took another cautious step backwards.

'Stop!' said the toad. 'And let me tell you a tale.' Alarmingly, the princess found herself rooted to the ground.

The toad said, complacently, 'I have strange power of speech; even though I can only usually stop one of three.'

'I rather think this is lese-majesty,' said Fiona, still struggling to lift her feet.

The toad fixed her with its glittering, golden eyes. 'Once upon a time I fell foul of a wicked wizard, who laid upon me the curse which you see, and then caused me to be magically flung to the most God-forsaken land in all the world.'

'Where was that?' asked Fiona, curious.

The toad gave a croaking cough. 'Let me put this tactfully. Where did you find me?'

'Oh,' said the princess.

'But the incantation did include a customary reversion clause. *Erk*. A matter of, as one might say, osculatory contract.'

'No,' said Fiona.

'A momentary and fleeting matter. None of your exotic requirements like being taken into a princess' bed all night. Merely the kiss of a good person whose moral worth stands in a certain relation to one's own.'

'No.'

'Think of it like this. Obviously you are a princess of high breeding . . .'

'At least you can tell,' said Fiona, flattered.

'The tiara *is* rather a giveaway.'

'It's pewter. We're a very poor kingdom; my father has only fivescore subjects even when you count the sheep.'

'All the better,' said the toad. 'In poverty there is tremendous moral worth. And as I was saying – since you are a princess I'll wager five to one that your father has planned all sorts of grotesque and ridiculous ways of testing the princes who come seeking your hand.'

She sighed, and nodded.

'Precisely! But are *you* worthy? Should *you* too not be tested according to the ancient customs of the world? Have *you* given a crust of bread to a dwarf recently?'

Princess Fiona opened her mouth and closed it again. 'Look. If I take the curse off you, can we simply leave it at that? I'm going to the College of Sorcery myself – if my parents will ever let me – and I'll learn to make my own living. Getting involved with princes can wait, thank you very much.'

'I shall make no further claims on you,' said the toad in the sincerest of croaks. And then, as she still hesitated: 'You could always shut your eyes.'

Looking the toad severely in the eye, the princess knelt, bent forward and bestowed an exceedingly chaste kiss somewhere in the general region of its head. For an instant a cloud seemed to pass over the Sun, and there was that unmistakable tingle which comes with enchantment or champagne.

She leant back, still kneeling. Sure enough, where an ugly, warty toad had squatted, there was now a sleek and handsome frog.

'I see,' the princess said after a long moment.

'Ahh, it's good to be back to normal,' said the frog. 'Thank you, your majesty. I feel as fit as a . . . prince.' At this point it appeared to notice something. 'Oh. Conservation law. –Well, I must, be going. *Awwk*.'

The last agonized croak was because Fiona had noticed the same something, and had seized the frog in a firm grip. Her previously pale and lily-white hands were now covered in warts that crowded together like cobblestones.

'You knew this was going to happen!' she shrieked.

'Well, it was a possibility,' said the frog.

Fiona squeezed it vengefully, and with distaste repeated the kiss. Nothing happened.

'Now that is interesting,' said the frog. 'I suppose we are no longer equal in moral worthiness, as is necessary for such curses to be transferred.'

Distracted, the princess dropped the slimy creature. '*Equal*? You're not telling me a princess is morally the same as a toad?'

'Ah. You are very virtuous, for a princess; and I was very virtuous, for a toad. As a frog I'm far more despicable, since I'm gloating terribly over having shifted my curse to a poor innocent creature like yourself. Excuse me,' it added, dodging the princess' foot as it came down. 'I must go and see a man about a frog.' With a splash, it was gone.

Princess Fiona stared into the murky water; the ripples died and her own reflection took shape. It seemed an appropriate time to shut her eyes, but she forced them to stay open: her fingers could feel the swarming warts on her face, and she might as well learn just how unprincesslike her complexion had become. In the water, though, it looked the same as ever. Apparently magical warts had no reflections; possibly they did not even cast shadows, though this would be slightly more difficult to test.

The sun was lower in the sky. The princess' vague thoughts of throwing herself with a despairing cry into the pool, or of becoming a hermit never again to be seen by mortal man, were dispelled by the more practical considerations of duckweed and dinner.

★

She walked more and more slowly, though, as the palace came into view – a quarter-mile frontage of crumbling marble and alabaster. It seemed uncountable ages old, though in fact the former King of Altrund had caused it to be erected in a single night by means of a substandard wishing ring. Alas, the accumulated cost of servants and repairs was somewhat further beyond the dreams of avarice than the wealth King Sivvens had requested with his second wish; while the wasted third wish, said to have involved the former Queen and a sausage, was among the family's best kept secrets.

Taking a short cut through the disused portions of the palace, Fiona passed in succession through the Great Hall, the Great Ballroom with its litter of shrivelled pumpkins, the Great Dungeon and the cobwebbed Great Cupboard before nearing the inhabited rooms. There she paused, hearing voices beyond the half-open door of the Great Sitting-Room.

'. . . exceedingly sorry about this wine,' her father the King was saying. 'We have far finer vintages, but the Steward of the Royal Cellars keeps, ah, misplacing them. But, to business! Naturally you come seeking the hand of my daughter, the beauteous flower of a most wealthy and kingly line. I must apologise that so much of the palace is being redecorated just now,' he added inventively.

There was an uneasy triple murmur.

'Well, my good princes, what dowry would you bring to be worthy of such a bride?'

The first prince's voice was loud: 'I am a crafty conqueror whose blood-dripping sword will hack a ruinous path of carnage through battlefields steeped in gore. And my consort will be no mere Queen but the Empress of an all-destroying Emperor!'

'Creditable,' said the King.

The voice of the second prince inclined towards oiliness.' Emperors may hold the world by the throat, but a merchant prince can put a noose of purse-strings about the throats of Emperors. Already I possess an immense fortune, and ultimately my Queen will share wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.'

'*Very* creditable,' said the King. On the tip of his tongue, Fiona thought, was the urgent question: 'How *far* beyond the dreams of avarice?'

The third voice was thin and reedy and set her teeth on edge. 'When tyrants, moneylenders and even the stones above their hallowed graves have fallen all to dust, my name shall linger on. To my Queen I bring no more than unquenchable love and immortality in verse and song. I am a poet,' he explained.

Outside, Fiona made a hideous face and was sobered by the thought of how more than hideous it must be. Inside, there was an embarrassed little pause.

'More wine, perhaps?' said the King at last.

'Thanks,' said the three princes together: 'I don't mind if I do.'

After a tentative query about the suitors' ages (which shed a sad light on the tendency of palace records to become lost, burnt or consumed by rats), the King suggested that some simple test of worthiness for the Princess Fiona's hand would be appropriate.

'None of those meaningless, old-fashioned tests,' he said with great fervour. 'No. We are practical men, you and I. Let us straightaway agree that he who at the end of three days returns with the most colossally valuable dowry shall win the hand of the Princess Fiona.'

'*Colossal*?' the merchant prince said in a pained voice.

Feeling it was nearly time to put a stop to this, Fiona peered around the half-open door. Without showing herself, she could see all four men reflected in the magic mirror on the far wall – a tall slab of pure, enchanted silver which magically attracted dust and smears.

The King sat on a portable throne with his back to the mirror: facing him across the table were the three princes, and Fiona squinted to study them. The first was short and looked bad-tempered; for some reason he kept one hand tucked into his tunic. The second was sufficiently stout that he had to sit some way back from the table. The third, the poet, was tall and might have been almost handsome; but at the time of his christening, someone had neglected to invite whichever fairy is responsible for bestowing chins.

'Happiness,' the King was saying, 'is all very well, but it can't buy money.'

The merchant prince glanced at his companions, as though estimating the strength of the bidding. 'A moderate amount,' he began – and his moist eyes met Fiona's in the mirror. 'Oh. Perhaps even a reasonably substantial amount,' he went on, and licked his lips.

Before Fiona could move, the wary gaze of the soldier also found her. He, too, licked his lips. He, too, studied his rivals; absentmindedly he dropped a hand to his sword. Meanwhile the poet also had seen Fiona's reflected glory, and was mumbling what appeared to be an impromptu villanelle.

With a certain inner glee, Princess Fiona strode into the room and let her suitors see her, warts and all. Bethrothal to any of these three, she considered, would undoubtedly be a fate worse than . . . well, warts.

'Father,' she said sweetly, 'I seem to have this curse.'

King Fardel turned, gaped, closed his eyes and moaned softly.

'Only making a preliminary tactical survey, of course –' said the first prince.

'Cannot be expected to enter into a binding commitment at this stage of negotiation,' said the second.

'Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new,' muttered the poet.

★

The princess helped herself to a glass of the wine – which was indeed only a locally produced Falernian-type – and told a discreetly edited version of her adventure. 'And so,' she concluded, 'only the kiss of a man of proper moral worth can lift this dreadful enchantment from me!'

'Meaningless, old-fashioned tests,' said the King through his teeth. 'Very well. Whosoever shall with a kiss lift the curse from my fair daughter, him shall she wed, and we'll have a quiet chat about marriage settlements afterwards.'

Inwardly Fiona was praying a twofold prayer: firstly, that one of these unlikely princes would somehow prove equal to her in moral worth, and secondly, that the King would not countenance her betrothal to a prince invisible beneath layers of warts.

After heartening himself with several long looks at the princess' unspoilt reflection, the first suitor stepped forward. He hesitated, though, on the very brink. 'You could always shut your eyes,' she said. He snorted, and Fiona bent down to recieve a kiss of military efficiency. Nothing happened. The prince made a strategic withdrawal to the previously prepared position of his chair.

When the second prince had screwed his determination to the sticking-place, Fiona found that she had to lean forward over his firkin of a stomach before their lips were close enough for an economical and businesslike kiss. Again, nothing happened.

'I am, after all, the youngest,' the third prince murmured; and Fiona turned up her face for a final kiss which was not so much poetic as chinless. The only result was that the poet-prince turned green and lurched backwards, gabbling about aesthetic values. Fiona found this disheartening.

With a resigned expression, the King rose and clapped his hands to draw attention. 'Whosoever shall in three days return with a healing spell, charm, cantrip, physic, unguent, balm, lotion, philtre, talisman, relic, totem, fetish, icon, periapt, incantation, rune, amulet, panacea –' At this point his breath failed him and he collapsed into uncontrollable coughing. But the suitors had gathered the general drift; they bowed to the King and (with averted gaze) to Fiona, and departed as one prince.

'Oh . . . *rats*,' said Princess Fiona.

'. . . theurgy, thaumaturgy, sorcery, wizardry, necromancy, invocation, conjuration . . . ' continued the afflicted King, rallying slightly. His voice died away as he noticed an absence of princes. There followed a stern lecture on the perfidy of faithless daughters who abandoned themselves to the embraces of strange frogs on the very day when three superlatively eligible suitors presented themselves, or at any rate two, or perhaps just one, but all the same . . . Still muttering, he left to consult the Court Physician, yet another post ineptly filled by the man Grommet.

Fiona pulled up a footstool and sat staring into the magic mirror. 'Mirror, mirror,' she said briskly. There was a soft chime, and the silver clouded over.

'Good afternoon,' said the mirror. 'What seems to be the trouble?' Fiona regarded the mirror suspiciously. 'You may have noticed this wart,' she said, touching one chosen at random.

'That is not a problem. That is a solution.'

'That's not exactly an answer,' said Fiona.

'You did not exactly ask a question,' the mirror said smugly. 'But consider. You have always wished to be a witch. Now you look the part, if not more so. You have always wished half-heartedly to run away and enrol at the College of Sorcery. Now, with one of three eminently unlovable princes likely to cure your complexion and claim your hand in two days, twenty-three hours and thirty-seven minutes, you have an excellent reason for running away. What more could you ask?'

'I was thinking more in terms of being a beautiful sorceress full of sinister glamour! *Not* a warty crone. Now is there a way I can lift the curse myself in the next day or two?'

'Indeed . . . there . . . is,' said the mirror with what sounded like reluctance.

'What is it?'

'Unfortunately . . . I cannot tell you, for reasons you would find absolutely inarguable if only I could tell you them.' The fog in the mirror began to clear again. 'Your three minutes are nearly up.'

'If you can't tell me that cure, suggest another,' Fiona said furiously.

'You might try throwing a party for all the peasantry,' said the silvery voice, diminuendo. 'There is this party game called Postman's Knock . . . '

Then the voice and the fog were gone, and

the omniscient magic mirror (which, as it happened, could be consulted only once in any three days) was again no more than a mirror.

Resisting her urge to give the silver a vicious kick, Princess Fiona left the room for the Great Boudoir. There she found Queen Kate placidly sewing hair shirts for the peasantry, who generally used these royal gifts to repair the roof of their hovel.

'Oh dear,' said the Queen when Fiona had told her tale. 'You're such a trial to me, sometimes I think you must have been changed for a goblin when you were a baby, that's all I can say, well you brought it on yourself, going out without your warm shawl . . . '

Fiona was used to being called a changeling in the course of any and every scolding, though in fact the local goblins were notoriously choosy. Several times, and with good reason, the peasantry had abandoned their ill-favoured son Dribble (Court Mathematician) outside known goblin caves, and each time he had been politely returned.

'Well,' said her mother, coming to the point as she occasionally did: 'I can see I still have to clear up your messes after you, just like when you were a baby, let me see, I know I put it somewhere, yes, here it is . . . ' She pulled an unsavoury-looking object from a cluttered drawer. 'There you are, you just put this in your hair like a good girl, something my stepmother gave me, a poisoned comb . . .'

Fiona hastily retreated a pace or two.

' . . . Just you put it in your hair and there you are, you stay asleep like the dead and for ten years or a hundred or whatever, until Prince Right comes along and takes the comb out of your hair and kisses you and all the rest of it, nothing like outliving your troubles, that's what my mother always used to say . . . '

But Fiona was already on her way to ask the advice of Grommet. She found him in the Great Pantry conscientiously testing the quality of the King's best wine. When he had recoiled from her appearance and listened to her story, he recalled his position as Chief Palace Torturer and made a slurred suggestion. 'Down in, um, down in one of the Great Torture Chambers, um, can't remember exactly which one, there's a, mmm, very nice iron mask. Very nice indeed. Good, um, workmanship. You might like to wear it . . . ?'

'Thank you,' said Fiona coldly.

★

The next day, heart hardened by the bedtime discovery that her affliction was by no means confined to hands and face, she set about a systematic programme of being kissed by the entire reluctant population of Altrund – even the all too aptly named lad Dribble. Every one of them, it seemed, was either despicably lacking in moral worth or unfairly endowed with it. In the afternoon, after a lack of success with several sheep, she waylaid a wandering friar. The friar denounced her both before and afterwards as a sinful temptation sent by the devil; Fiona considered this to be undue flattery.

On the second day she gathered, compounded, infused and drank no less than sixty-four traditional herbal remedies, whose taste varied across a wide spectrum from unpleasant to unheard-of. An omen presented itself when the word *NARCISSUS* was found written in frogspawn across the palace forecourt, but no decoction of this plant had the slightest visible effect. The day's only success was scored by a mysterious and forgotten elixir found in the palace medicine cabinet: the dose remaining in the phial sufficed to remove one medium-sized wart from the back of the princess' left hand. This was hailed as a great stride forward by almost everyone, except Fiona.

On the morning of the third day, a more than usually appalling dwarf arrived at the palace. He boasted a squint, a bulbous nose, a club foot, a humped back, a cauliflower ear and all the other impedimentia so fashionable among dwarves. Moreover, his complexion bore a startling resemblance to Fiona's.

'I'll riddle ye a riddle, my maiden fair,' he said to the princess, leaping and capering with repulsive agility. 'I'll riddle your warts away with riddling words, that I will, and ye must riddle my name. If ye riddle it not aright, then ye must be mine forever. Will ye riddle me this riddle, fair princess?'

At this difficult juncture the King came into the Great Reception Room to inspect the visitor. 'Why, Rumpelstiltskin, old chap . . . '

'Bah,' said the dwarf, and left in considerable dudgeon.

The afternoon wore on; the sun sank in the sky; and the Court Mathematician, stationed in the topmost tower of the palace, presently came running down to announce the sighting of four princes in the distance. When sent aloft to count again, he corrected this estimate to two. Sure enough, three princes came riding up to the Great Door and took their turns to blow the Great Horn which had hung there since the rusting of the Great Knocker.

Fiona's spirits sank lower as once again the King and princes sat about the table. Would it be worse to endure a husband steeped in gore, like the first prince; or one glistening with greasiness, like the second; or one who like the third was simply wet?

Unwrapping his burden, the soldier prince slammed an iron bowl down on the table. Something slimy and dark-red bubbled within, and a fearful, mephitic stench expanded to fill the room. 'I bring as my gift the hot blood from a dragon's heart, slain by my own staunch sword this very morn! Let the princess sup deep ere it cools, and all her ills shall be healed.'

'Let the bowl be covered lest it cool too soon,' the King suggested, with all the dignity possible to a man firmly clutching his nose.

The second prince unveiled an exquisite golden chalice studded with costly gems. Little blue flames flickered over it; there was a yet more choking and paralysing reek. 'Let not the fair princess's lips be sullied with horrid gore,' said this prince. 'Here is fiery brimstone and quicksilver torn at *colossal* expense from the heart of the Smoking Mountain! Let its cleansing fire now burn this affliction from the maiden's skin.'

'Excellent,' the King said manfully through paroxysms of coughing. 'Now it merely remains –'

'Excuse me,' said the third prince, producing a thick roll of parchment.

'Oh yes,' said the King. 'Sorry.'

'Let not these crude and crass remedies defile the sweet princess either within or without. I bring the Master Cantrip of Purification, prepared by myself from the most authentic sources. Let the princess but listen to its nineteen thousand stanzas – of a wondrous poetry withal, fit to charm the very soul from the body – and doubtless the bane which lies upon her shall melt away and be gone like the snow of, ah, last winter.'

For some reason Fiona found this project the most depressing of the three.

At the table there was a hot altercation as to whether the dragon-blood or brimstone should be tested first; even the poet agreed half-heartedly that his nineteen thousand stanzas should be allowed to come as a climax rather than be squandered too early in the proceedings. Fiona herself was stationed by the mirror so that her wartless and undeniably attractive reflection could maintain the princes' enthusiasm at a decent level. Admiring her profile out of the corner of one eye, she was struck by a sudden thought.

Thanks more to the resources of the Great Library than those of the Acting Royal Governess, the Princess Fiona had had an excellent classical education.

'Very well,' the King was saying. 'Let blind Chance make the choice between you; let the Fates guide my unseeing finger.' He stood, clapped the fingers of his left hand over both eyes, and waved the other hand in mystic arabesques. It came to rest pointing unerringly and confidently at the second, or merchant, prince. 'So be it!' said the King. 'Now, as to the method of application –'

The stench of brimstone was alarmingly strong. But the princess had discovered that when one is about to be forcibly cured of warts in mere minutes, it concentrates the mind wonderfully. She reached the end of her train of thought, nodded, murmured 'Narcissus,' under her breath – and leant forward to touch lips with her own morally identical image in the mirror.

For an instant shadows flitted in the room, and Fiona felt an unmistakable tingle. Rapidly the mirror filled with fog; she had never before seen warty fog.

'Oh *fie*,' said a silvery but exasperated voice. 'You guessed.'

When the fog cleared Fiona saw that her image was thoroughly encrusted with warts; so, interestingly, were the images of the King, the princes, the walls and the furniture. Rubbing her once again lily-white hands with satisfaction, she moved towards the table.

'Father,' she said sweetly, 'I have some good news for you.'

King Fardel turned, gawped, closed his eyes and moaned faintly. The princes appeared momentarily speechless.

'Alackaday,' she cried, 'the royal word of my father the king must prevent my marrying any of you good and noble princes. Only the curer of my affliction may seek my hand. Oh woe!' Fiona was beginning to enjoy herself.

'I do not remember those particular words,' said the merchant.

'You left before he'd finished ,' she reminded him.

'All's well that ends well,' said the King tediously, 'and no doubt some simple quest on the sound cash basis I originally suggested –'

'Oh woe!' said Fiona, injecting as much agony into her tones as she could. 'The royal word of my father the king may not be lightly set aside. It is my doom to travel now to the College of Sorcery, there to learn which mighty enchanter has lifted my curse from afar – and thus earnt my hand in marriage.'

'Now wait a minute,' the first prince said.

'But perhaps wiser counsels may be found over good food and good wine,' said the princess in softer tones. 'I shall summon the Master of the Revels, the Palace Butler, the Steward of the Royal Cellars, the Court Jester, the Chef to the King's Court, the Royal –'

'All right,' said the King, brightening somewhat. 'He's in the Great Pantry, I believe. Wiser counsels, yes, over food and drink and merriment . . . ' Again he studied the second prince and seemed to be inwardly calculating.

'And I could still read you my lovely cantrip,' the third prince was saying wistfully as Fiona slipped out of the room.

She sent Grommet to the men with quantities of wine; she retreated to her room, changed clothes and picked up a bundle of necessities she had had packed for some little while; she made her stealthy way to the normally disused Great Stables. There was no difficulty at all in choosing between the three steeds there. The huge fiery stallion which constantly rolled its eyes and foamed at the mouth looked more inclined to devour princesses than carry them; the asthmatic and broken-baced donkey reminded her too much of its owner. She saddled the stout gelding with the richly bejewelled harness, and set off. There was an inn not far outside the valley, the Prancing Prince; Fiona thought she could reach it before dark.

Near the pond she reined in and dismounted.

'Thanks for the hint,' she called. 'About Narcissus.'

A croak answered her. 'Don't mention it; a mere afterthought. *Noblesse oblige*.'

'I have a proposition for you,' said Fiona. 'I'm off to the College of Sorcery to enrol as a student witch, and I'll be needing a familiar. Talking cats are ten a penny, but a talking frog, now . . . '

'Pint of fresh milk every day and it's a bargain.'

And so the Princess and the frog rode out of the tale together, and lived happily ever after. □

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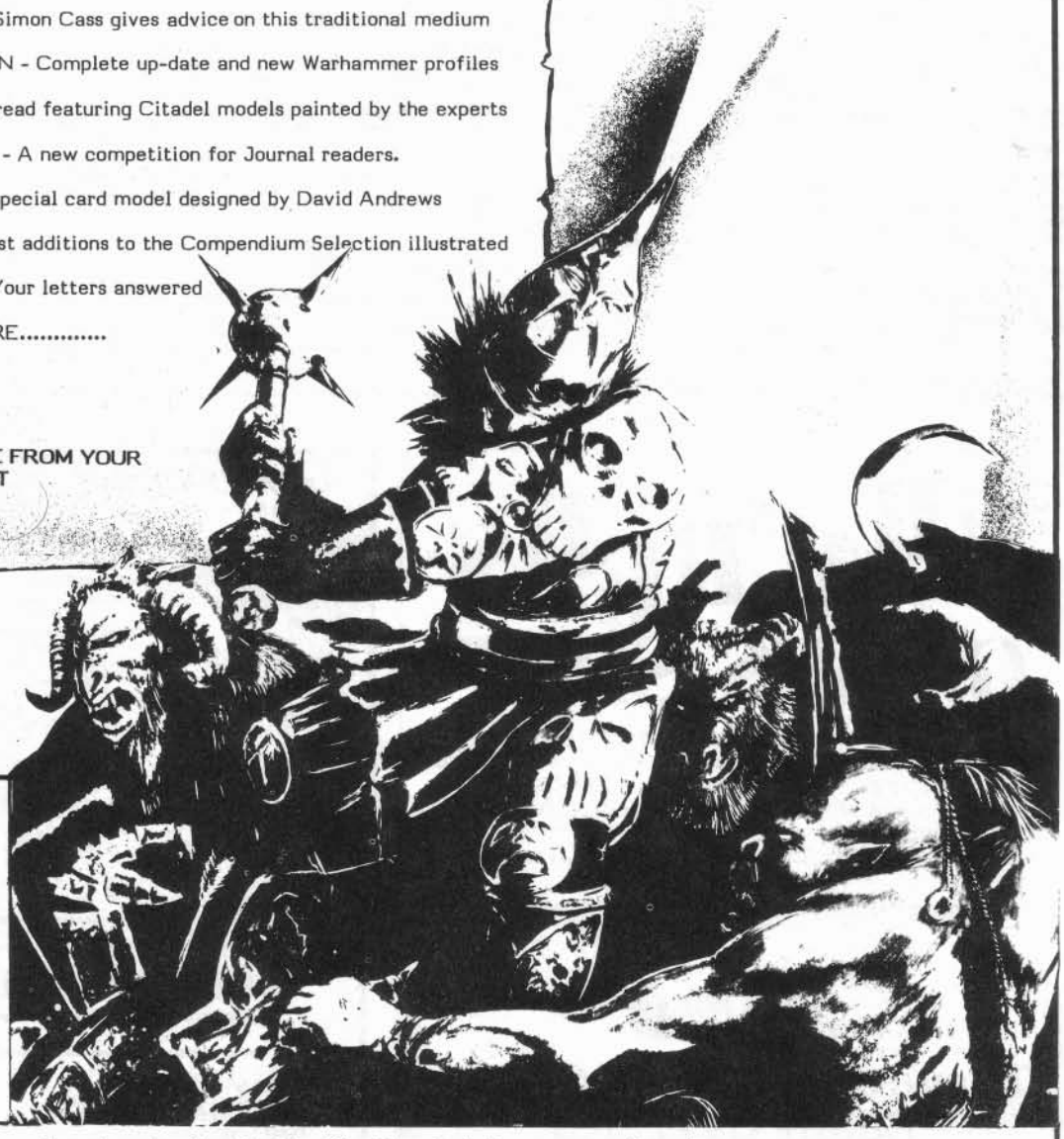

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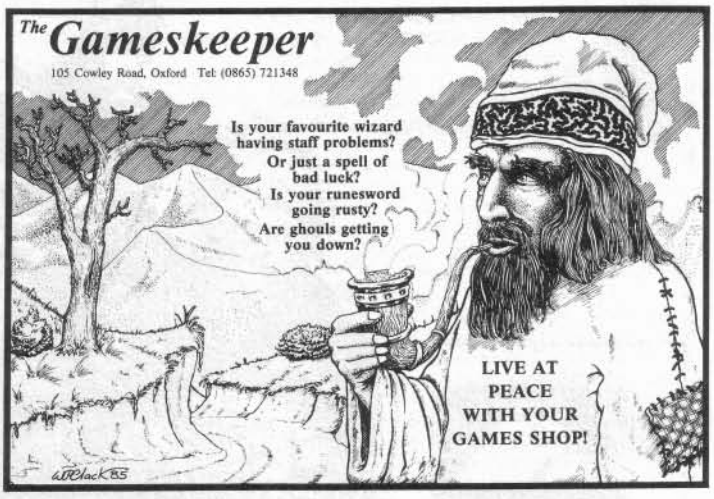

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Dear *WD*,

Not being sure as to how *Eye of Newt* would be received, I was interested to read Michael Watkinson's comments (*WD63*) and would like to take to take this opportunity to reply to them.

One thing I've noticed about many of the *AD&D* campaigns I've been involved with is their tendency to turn into an 'arms race'. There is an inbuilt tendency towards Monty Haulism unless the DM is very careful about magic items – even when the supply is limited to those found whilst adventuring. Allowing characters to churn out *Potion of Invulnerability* like homebrew can hardly improve matters and in *Eye of Newt* I wanted to show how much time and trouble can be involved. From the basic system in *WD59*, anyone can attempt to make an item if they can marshal the necessary spells and ingredients. I've nothing against MUs co-operating to make an item – perhaps I didn't make this clear enough – but the lower the level, the greater the chance of failure. Magic items have become devalued in *AD&D* due to their availability and the object of *Eye of Newt* was to make people think about how rare and valuable these items really are.

So what's the point of this vast and rambling series if no-one has powerful enough characters to use it? Well, some characters (although rarely) do achieve high levels and if, as Michael says 'by the time anyone gets to about 14th level they should think about retiring', advanced magical research with the creation of spells and items is the sort of thing with which they might fill their new-found leisure.

All the best,
Graeme Davis, Durham.

Dear *WD*,

The point brought up by Michael Watkinson (*WD63*) about the building of bases by characters quite annoyed me. If he had a full understanding of the level system he would realise that the difference between an 8th and 9th level character is not in equipment or fighting proficiency but in the experience gained by the character. For a fighter to go from 8th to 9th level an immense amount of experience needs to be gained, so therefore it will easier for the 9th level character to build a keep, tower or whatever. It's like having a master carpenter and an apprentice; the apprentice will eventually make a table to the same standard as the master but in twice the time that the master would.

Your faithfully,
Chris Maltman, Louth, Lincolnshire.

Dear *WD*,

As an inland waterways enthusiast I was pleased to see *A Place of Damp and Darkness* by Garth Nix. However, Mr Nix is in error on a number of points.

In the first place Garth seems to believe that the difference between a barge and a narrow boat is that that latter has has an engine while the former does not. The actual difference is clearly implied in the term 'narrow boat': a barge is, by definition at least eleven feet wide, usually around fourteen feet and sometimes even wider. A narrow boat on the other hand is no more than seven feet wide. The usual criterion for which were used by canal carriers was the minimum dimensions of the locks through which the boat would have to pass.

Locks are not as simple as indicated either. Unless the water levels on both sides of the gate are equal the water pressure holds the gate firmly shut. It is therefore necessary to let water in or out (sometimes both!) through shutters knows as paddles, which are generally raised and lowered with a windlass. For this reason it usually takes about quarter of an hour to pass through a lock, something characters pursued by aquatic ghouls should bear in mind.

Actually, sewer locks would have to be more complex still, more like river locks than those of canals. There would have to be a weir (which can be a dangerous hazard to navigate) at each lock. Otherwise flash floods would sweep away the gates and paddle gear leaving waterfalls in their place until the locks were rebuilt.

Yours,
Peter Jeffery, Leicester.

Dear *WD*,

I was impressed by the *Eye of Newt* series – most informative. I agree to some extent with Michael Watkinson, but at least it is now possible to send adventurers out on errands to obtain such tricky items as 1 pint of criosphinx urine! There is, of course, the added delight of puzzling a party by item descriptions. As for the assorted curses bestowed upon *Fiend Factory* and *Treasure Chest*, such articles are very useful as a basis for thwarting individuals who know official monsters and magic items inside out. Anyway, I enjoy reading them!

Yours,
Nigel Espley, Kingswinford.

Dear *WD*,

Having seen the vast improvement in the *Fiend Factory* of late (eg the marvellously detailed shapelings and *O Caber*) why change it to minority games? New monsters are always of great interest to young *D&D* players wishing to include new monsters in their emerging worlds. The appeal fades after a while, especially now there are three hardbacked books full of the things, but so long as people are starting playing *D&D* there will be a demand for well thought-out creatures. Creatures for *RQ, Cthulhu, Traveller* et al are not in anything like the same demand. If the flow of good material for the *Factory* is lessening, perhaps it should be made bi-monthly rather than opening its doors to creatures which only a handful of people will use.

Yours,
John Grandidge, Oxford.

Dear *WD*,

Although not wishing this letter to be a clichéd '*D&D* is best so don't print anything else', I would like to point out that a magazine featuring several games systems has little chance of representing any in a sufficiently useful format for the committed gamer. Since the introduction of even the *RuneQuest* articles, the standard of the *D&D* material has dropped to being what seems a reluctant space-filler.

Even though the *RuneQuest* articles have proved useful I believe the introduction of two new systems is merely a misguided attempt to attract new readers which will inevitably result in the loss of disillusioned, established readers. If the new systems must be included, then there must be a serious attempt to improve the existing articles by the editors or an increased contribution by the magazine's readers.

Yours optimistically,
David Eagles, Worthing.

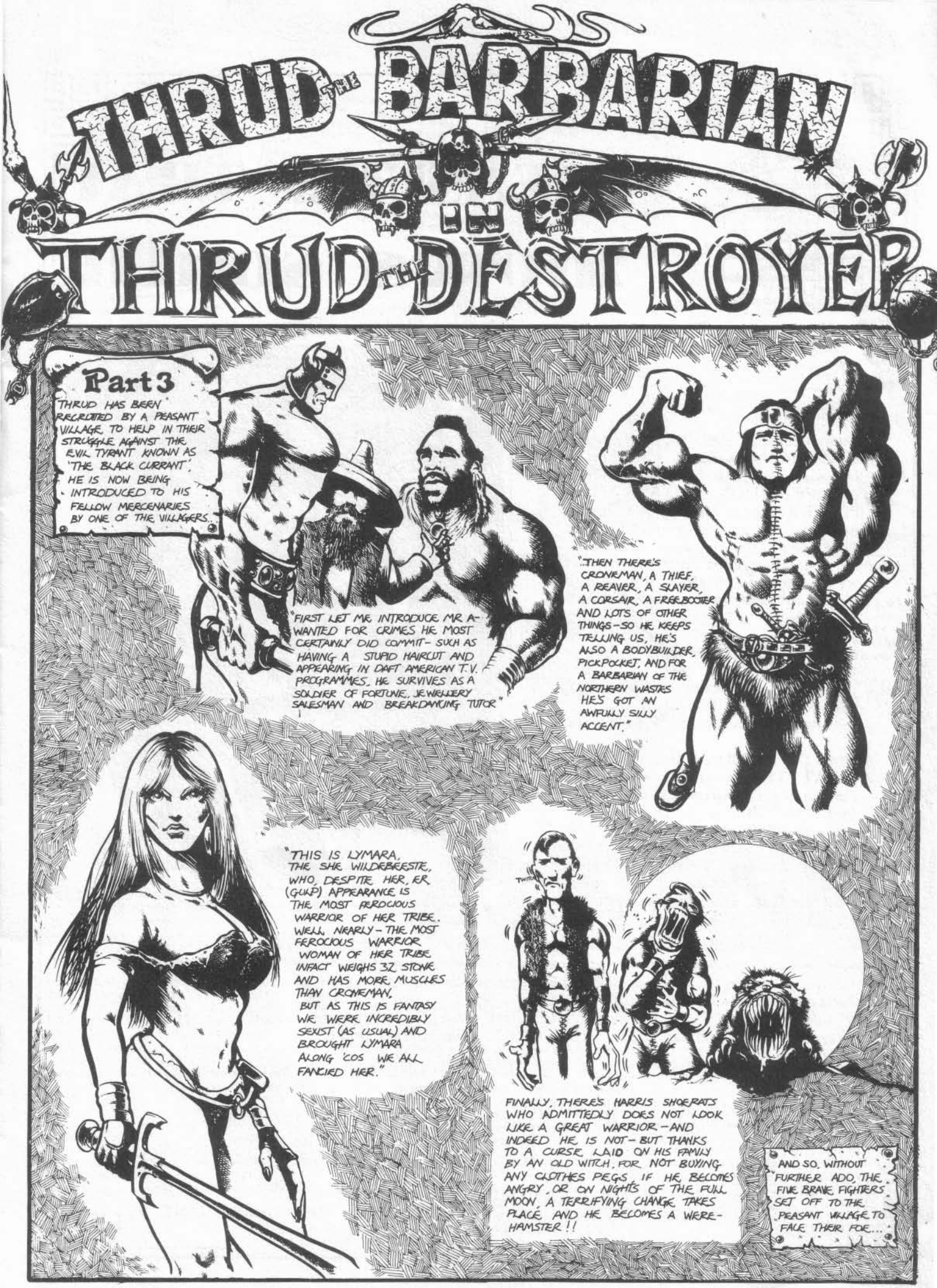
Dear *WD*,

I'm sorry that my comments on *Ringworld* irritated Mark Walton (*WD62*), but I don't apologise for the review. For the price asked, that game would have to be far better thought through to earn my recommendation. The low mark for presentation reflected the difficulty of pursuing facts through several poorly-organised chapters of several books, good art notwithstanding.

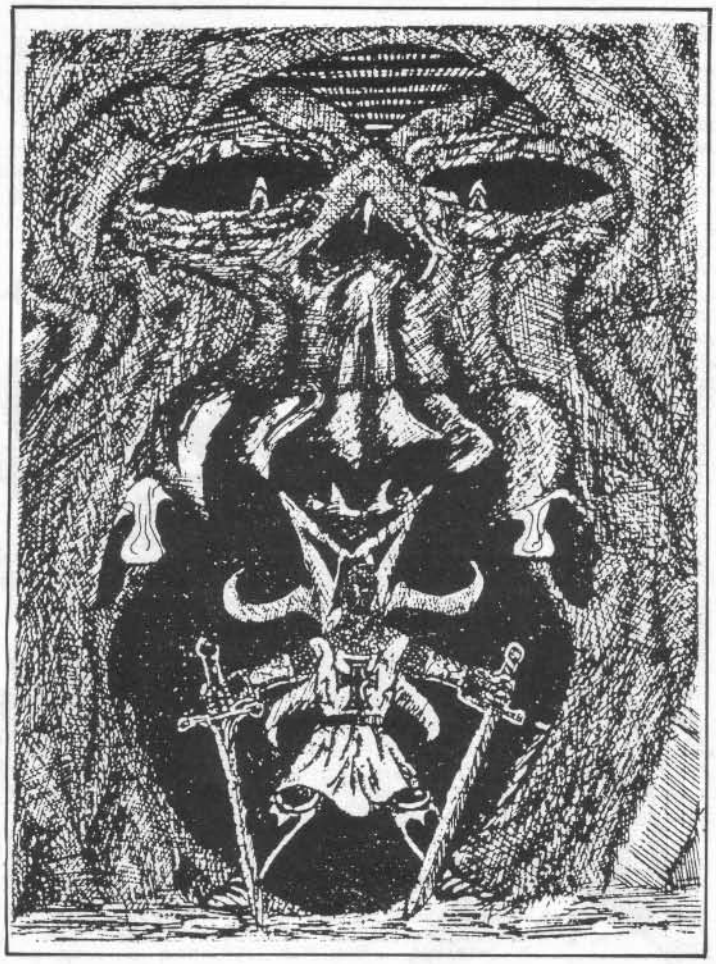
Incidentally, I don't see why Peter Murawski thought the Demonist to be solitary by nature, I *didn't* say so!

Yours,
Phil Masters, Stevenage.

THRUD THE BARBARIAN IN THRUD THE DESTROYER



TREASURE TRAP moves south



Commencing in May, **Treasure Trap** is moving to a new site at **Chislehurst Caves.** Now you can take part in a realm of LIVE ACTION FANTASY ROLE PLAYING which lies deep within our extensive cave system in south London.

Pit your wits against the many monsters, tricks, traps and puzzles that exist within our 22 miles of underground labyrinth at **Chislehurst.**

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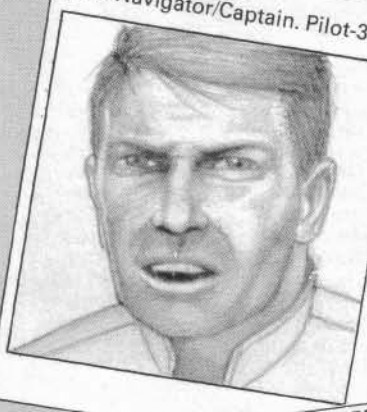
Should you wish to join **Treasure Trap**, we run an introductory basic adventure which gives you a chance to try out all the major character classes available. The cost of this adventure is £10, which, should you decide to join, is deducted from the cost of membership which is £46 (£34 to anyone under 18). Further adventures cost £7.50.

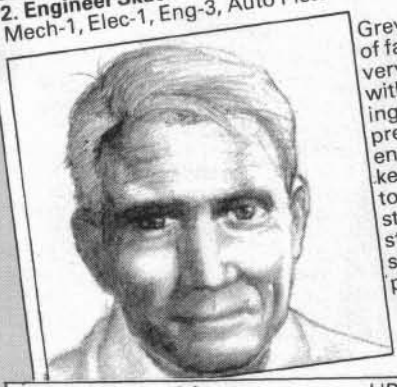
FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:
SWORDARCH LTD., CHISLEHURST CAVES, OLD HILL, CHISLEHURST, KENT.
TEL: 01-467 3264 *(Tours available)*

1. Captain S Logad UPP 8A6B99 Age:25
Pilot/Navigator/Captain. Pilot-3, Navig-2.



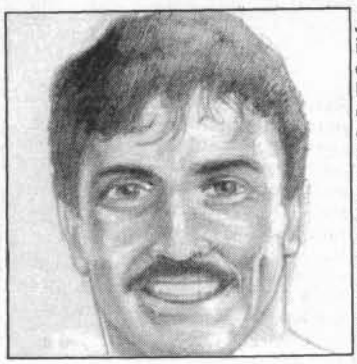
Logad is unshaven and generally looks in need of a few hours sleep. This all contributes to the fact he looks nearer 35 than his actual age. Passengers are not normally able to see him since his job is demanding, although they may arrange for appointments – having to wait 1-6 hours before being seen. Logad will be polite at all times and will refuse any attempts at bribery.

2. Engineer Skatt UPP 997765 Age:31
Mech-1, Elec-1, Eng-3, Auto Pistol-1.



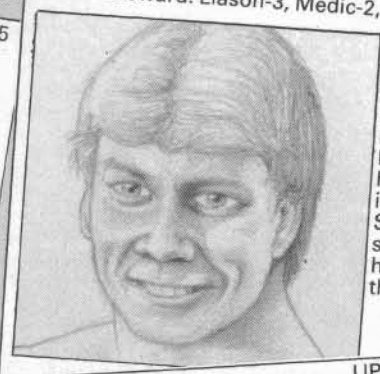
Grey-haired and slightly wrinkled of face, the passengers will see very little of Skatt, their first brush with him being during the welcoming dinner on the first night. He prefers to lurk in his beloved engineering section, although is keen to relate tales of old missions to anyone prepared to listen (and stay awake long enough). A typical story involves surviving on unsociable planets or getting a crippled ship home on half power . . .

3. Chief Steward Jason UPP 877A96 Age:28
Steward-2, Body Pistol-1, Carousing-2.



Jason is an amiable character and is the first person to greet the characters when they board ship. Dark and good-looking, he is also efficient, not to mention scrupulous (and therefore not open to bribes). His attitude towards Franz leaves it in no doubt that he regards him as his junior. Jason is an interesting conversationalist, being able to talk about a wide variety of subjects, although his preferred topic is cooking (he is an accomplished chef). He is always armed with a body pistol.

4. Mr F Franz UPP 675A77 Age:23
Medic/Steward. Liason-3, Medic-2, Steward-1, Dagger-1.



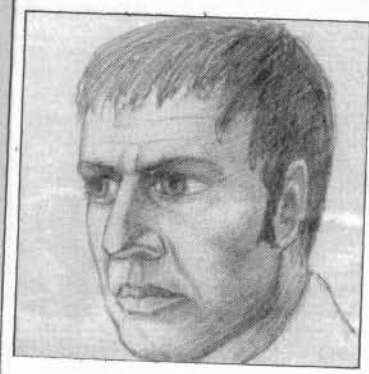
Franz will be with Jason when the characters board the Silver Wolf. Chubby, but still youthful, it will be apparent from his manner that he resents being junior to Jason: he will take jobs from him to give himself more responsibility. Franz is determined to become Chief Steward on a big liner and constantly works at this. In addition to his duties as steward, he acts in the role of ship's doctor.

5. Zod UPP E8B463 Age:22
Auto Pistol-2.

Zod, an ex-boxer, has been hired by the 'patron' to keep a close eye on the characters and the crate, his main purpose being to stop them stealing it. Although not particurly bright, he is well built and fairly strong: his briefing will prevent him being tricked to any great degree. Although he is to make sure that the box is not damaged in jump, this will not get in the way of the players investigating it.

Zod has been instructed to stop anyone (apart from one recognised person) touching the box before they reach their destination.

6. Duncan McFerd UPP 876A45 Age:47



A very quiet 'non-entity' of a person – not that it matters since he exits after one and a half days. Taciturn, the characters shouldn't run in to him as he will keep very much to himself. His past has been a continual drift from one shady job to another: he is currently unemployed.

SMUGGLERS

A UNIQUE TRAVELLER ADVENTURE BY GRAHAM MILLER

INTRODUCTION

The characters have been contracted to deliver a crate containing a new scientific discovery to laboratories on a nearby planet. The crate has been booked to travel on the Silver Wolf, a subsidised merchant scheduled to depart shortly. This method of transport has been chosen for reasons of insurance (the broker will not accept liability for alternatives) and the characters are needed to ensure the box arrives in one piece at its destination (to scare off rivals, spies or whatever). Although the contents of the crate are not fully described, the general impression given by the characters' patron (a slightly crazed scientist type) is that the discovery could be of some importance.

GM's Notes

No specific planets for the journey have been selected for this adventure and you should choose two suitable ones from one of the sectors in your campaign (or create two planets if this is a one-off). Throughout the adventure the destination is referred to as 'the next planet'.

PERSONALITIES

The adventure depends greatly on the characters' dealings with the cast of NPCs on board the Silver Wolf. GMs should make careful notes as to the personalities on board and where they are likely to be at certain times.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

All non-player characters on board the Silver Wolf are working for the Imperial TV Company, making the next series of 'Candid Camera' (a TV show where practical jokes are played on members of the public and filmed using hidden cameras, later being shown on the show). The entire week-long journey in jump is being filmed using hidden cameras. The GM should ensure that a 'normal' ship-board atmosphere is maintained throughout. Rumours about drug-running may also be used to enhance the effect.

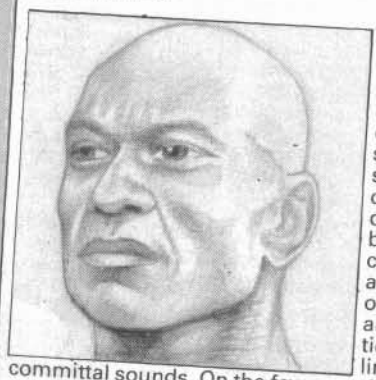
Characters may, naturally, wish to bring weapons and armour on board the ship. Full military gear would be unthinkable aboard a 'pleasure' cruiser – Jack is perfectly acceptable as is Mesh (although the latter will turn a few heads), but nothing heavier. Franz may be bribed to allow weapons onto the ship – blades will cost Cr250 each, pistols (of any type) Cr750.

Violence on board ship will be curbed by the most expedient method. Characters barging into occupied staterooms demanding confessions, etc, can expect to see the accused hit the panic button. The two stewards will arrive shortly afterwards armed with auto pistols, followed a few minutes later by any able-bodied passenger who feels like helping out. Of special note is the ship's locker (Jason's room, A Deck) which has a fingerprint lock designed to respond only to Company representatives. This is also fitted with a heat sensor. ▷

7. Ms Zola Quarx UPP 8B7B96 Age:20

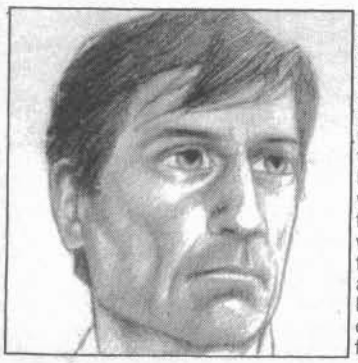
A typical sultry young pop starlet, Zola flaunts everything – clothes, money, and mostly herself. She is dressed in the latest, most outrageous fashion, and will be wearing a different garment each time the characters see her. Her reactions are extreme – a roll of 8+ will seem to be a roll of 10+, similarly, on a roll of 6– she will order her bodyguard, Drago, to remove the offending person. Check her reaction each day, but for each day of friendship there is a DM of +1. Zola is on holiday on this voyage and is celebrating in style. Should anyone decide against turning up to her party mid-week, she will snub them for the rest of the voyage.

8. Drago
Auto Pistol-1. UPP DAC445 Age:43



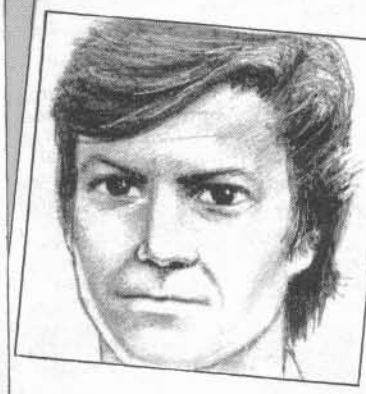
Drago is Zola Quarx's bodyguard and is well suited to the task, his qualifications including being an ex-wrestler. Of heavy build, most of his muscular development seems to have sagged to his stomach – nevertheless he's a capable and forceful bouncer. Not overly bright, Drago has had brushes with the law and has a criminal record (although not for anything serious). He is very wary of being conned and thus, should anyone engage him in conversation, they will find his replies limited to grunts and non-committal sounds. On the few occasions he does speak, he is very wary and alert.

9. Mr G Anderson UPP 78AD68 Age:28



Currently serving in the Merchant service, Anderson is in the process of clinching a deal with a planet two jumps away. A shrewd businessman and quite unscrupulous in his methods, he will try to present the image of an honest businessman, although his weasly appearance detracts a little from this deception. He'll deal with any apparently sane person, tending to shun anyone making accusations, creating a disturbance, etc. Anderson is formally dressed, although his suit looks a few years out of date.

10. Mr T Betler UPP A89975 Age:30

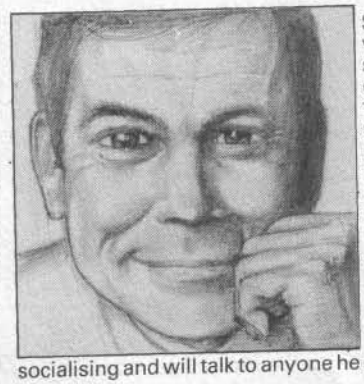


Betler is an ex-Marine captain – a very successful one until he was thrown out for drinking on duty. He is very bitter towards the Marines and anyone sympathising with him will get a +2 reaction modifier (and a similar penalty if they don't). He still upholds his innocence over the matter, maintaining that he took the bottle from a younger marine to 'save him from himself'. Anyone talking to Betler will get his full story.

11. Mrs Gren UPP 9D8789 Age:32

Mrs Gren is a big game hunter bound for the next planet for its bountiful game reserves. She tries very hard to be a social climber and is particularly able at talking about absolutely nothing. She drinks only expensive cocktails and laughs in a loud, high-pitched voice at her own jokes. Check against character intelligence (roll INT or less) to see whether or not this facade of worthless charm is penetrated – a failed roll indicates a character is taken in. Gren's rifle, telescopic sights and ammunition are in the ship's locker.

12. Mr R Slynger UPP 678758 Age:37



Slynger is a businessman taking a year-long holiday around all the sights of the sector. His stateroom contains all the usual paraphenalia that a tourist carries (anti-grav swimming ring, holographic recorder, computerised phrase book of local dialects, etc). Anyone engaging in long conversations with him is liable to be asked back to have a look at his holographs. These are typical sights like the triple sunset on Orcist, the pyramid circles on Thisbe, asteroids burning up in the Regina night sky, etc. He enjoys socialising and will talk to anyone he deems normal (reaction roll at +2).

The Box
The box the players have been commissioned to look after will be immune to all attempts to prise it open, cut it open or blow it up. It is psionically shielded and contains the following: an anti-grav module, several coloured smoke canisters, a short range communicator and a remote control device.

In the course of the adventure, should the crew or other passengers be told about the strange antics of the box, they will become very curious and will want to see it for themselves. When they arrive, however, everything will have returned to normal, any smoke being removed by the air conditioning. A crew member will proceed to disarm the character reporting his antics before locking him up, with a note on the door proclaiming the inhabitant as 'Dangerously Insane'. Franz will use anaesthetic to render unco-operative characters unconscious.

EVENTS
Day 1. Just after lunch, a character will find the strangled body of McFerd in their stateroom. If the Captain or any other crew member is told, they will just advise everyone to lock their doors at 'night'. (The 'body' was in a low berth and the actor made up to look like the body is now in the same low berth.) The referee can now choose either the player who over-reacts the most, or someone at random. That night this same character will see a dark figure leave the room. As the character rolls over, he or she will hear the rustle of paper and feel cold steel on their cheek. A note is daggered to their pillow. It reads in block capitals 'YOU NEXT', written with the Imperial equivalent of a biro, ie untraceable.

Day 2. This day will pass without any strange occurrences, giving the characters a chance to interview everyone about yesterday's events. If any character is psionic, than at least three people will wear shields and will object most strongly to being asked to remove them. (Invasion of mental privacy, etc). Meals will be served on time, and everything seems to go well. At the evening meal Zola Quarx will announce that everyone is invited to a party. Sure enough, that evening in the port recreational area, music will play and the drink will flow. About half an hour into the party Mrs Gren will collapse. Franz will instantly appear on the scene and carry her to the sickbay. No 'medical laymen' will be allowed to help (ie the characters). Poison will be found in the glass from which she was drinking (added afterwards in all the confusion). Before the party finally disperses, people will start talking about a psionic computer possessing people and making them do these things. The two stewards will suppress these rumours. On returning to his/her stateroom, the character who found McFerd's body will find a note *'ENJOY THE LAST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE'*. Again it is written in block capitals with an untraceable pen.

Day 3. In the morning it will be announced that Mrs Gren died of poisoning during the night. Either the character watching the box or Skatt will ask the other characters to come and look at it. Skatt will then disappear. The box is floating 1m off the ground and will move if pushed.

Once every 5 game minutes roll on the table see what will happen. If the effect rolled is already in progress, it will stop. The smoke is non-toxic and coloured, and will not continue for more than 15 minutes. Noise means that strange buzzes, whistles and clicks will be audible but not deafening. If the box speaks it will be very condescending about the entire human race, apart from one man whom it calls the creator.

Die Roll	1-2	3	4	5	6
Effect	Smoke	Noise	Nothing	Float	Speak

If the crew is told about any of the other effects, they will tell the characters to surround the box with blast panels and wait for the jump to end. If anyone tells a crew member about the speaking box, this crew member will definitely want to see it. However, when he arrives in the hold the box will cease all abnormal functions and appear as a perfectly normal box. The character who reported it will be locked in his stateroom, with all lock-picking devices and weapons removed. A notice is placed on the door, it reads 'Mentally unstable: do not enter'. Only the Chief Steward and the Captain will know the entry code which should be about 10 digits long. If no-one falls into this trap, remind them that such goings-on should not go unreported! That night loud screams and thuds will be heard from the other staterooms. Upon investigating, they'll see that the main commotion is in the starboard recreational area. Here they'll see some passengers grouped along three prostrate forms on the floor. One is Betler, the ex-Marine, still holding a blood-stained axe. Franz is crouching over the body of Slynger, the tourist, and Zola Quarx lies unheeded, but still breathing, a little apart from them. As Franz takes Slynger to the sickbay to treat his neck injuries, the story emerges. Betler got an axe from its emergency bracket on the wall. This alerted Franz who went to the sickbay to get a tranquiliser. As he came out of the door, Slynger came running in, chased by Betler wielding the axe. Betler tried to decapitate Slynger, but was jabbed by Franz's tranquiliser syringe after the first blow. Ms Quarx, who had watched all this from her door, fainted and banged her head. Everybody slowly drifts back to bed, taking care to lock their doors.

Day 4. In the morning, all the talk over breakfast will be about the events of last night. The most persistent rumour is that Betler was possessed by a psionic machine, and that in that state he could have killed Mrs Gren as well. A death threat will be given to the 'mentally unstable' character, or, failing this, to the one who found the body of McFerd. It will be written in goat's blood and will make some reference to the box. The crew will repeat their warning to lock all doors at 'night'. Before lunch, three pistol shots will be heard from Mr Anderson's stateroom. When the characters arrive, Franz will be there, attending to Mr Anderson who has blood-stained bandages around his upper left arm and chest. He appears to have passed out, and Franz will refuse any offers of medical assistance from the characters. Anderson will be taken to the sickbay. This is all, of course, just a piece of good acting, blanks were used and the bandages were prepared beforehand.

Day 5. As normal as is possible. If the box is investigated, it will try to charge anyone who comes near it, but these attacks are always avoidable. That night, one character will hear his door slam shut. If he opens it to investigate, he will see a figure standing in the light from the door. As he turns round, the character instantly recognises him. It is McFerd, he looks very pale and has red marks round his neck.

Upon seeing that he has been observed, he disappears into the shadows. It should be stressed that the characters found the dead body of McFerd, and know that he is irrefutably dead. However, in appearance and manner, the apparition was identical to McFerd.

Day 6. The breakfast-time chatter is rife with stories of McFerd. During the morning, however, Franz will ask the characters to go down to the hold, as Skatt is calling on the intercom. When they arrive at the box, a black cloud will be hanging over it. As they approach, it will start to speak. It will start with its domination of Betler, then continue with the murders of McFerd, Gren and Slynger, through Betler. When Betler finally got caught, however, its right/wrong circuits finally cut in and it was aware of the error of its ways. It hadn't wanted to kill at first, but had soon grown to like it. It just wanted to say that it was deeply sorry, but it didn't know if a computer could be tried in court or not. If the crew and passengers are called in at this point, they too will believe, and release anybody who was previously thought to be mentally unstable.

Day 7. Today the jump will end. About an hour after returning to normal space, the launch will be heard to detach and reattach. The port iris valve will slide open, and a man of normal build and neat black hair will leap out. He is about 30, 6ft tall, and any watcher of Imperial TV will recognise him as Fred Sobak, presenter of Candid Camera. If the characters recognise him (roll average of social and education or greater), they will instantly realise what is happening. Anyway, he will greet them with these words, 'Smile please, you're on television. We do hope you will come along to the studio this evening to see yourselves on "The Box"'. □

THE SILVER WOLF

The Silver Wolf is a 500-ton custom built ship. It is fitted out with Jump drive F, Manoeuvre drive C and Power plant G giving it a performance of Jump 2, 1G acceleration. Deck plans show interior layout only, showing accessible areas for the players.

KEY

A Deck, Living Quarters

1. Bridge. Only Captain Logad will be found here during normal operation.
2. Captain's Stateroom. Also contains a remote control unit and a modified short range communicator (both concealed).
3. Engineer's Stateroom.
4. Computer, Model 2.
5. Franz's Stateroom.
6. Jason's Stateroom. Contains the ship's locker.
7. Corridor. A hatch (down) leads to B Deck, area A.
8. Passenger Recreation Lounge.
9. Passenger Staterooms. Characters' rooms should be in the central block. There are 16 staterooms in all.
10. Galley. Jason and Franz have keys to this area.
11. Sick Bay. Franz (only) holds the key to this.
12. Launch. Piloted by the Captain, the launch is used for boarding or leaving the vessel. There are 26 couches fitted.

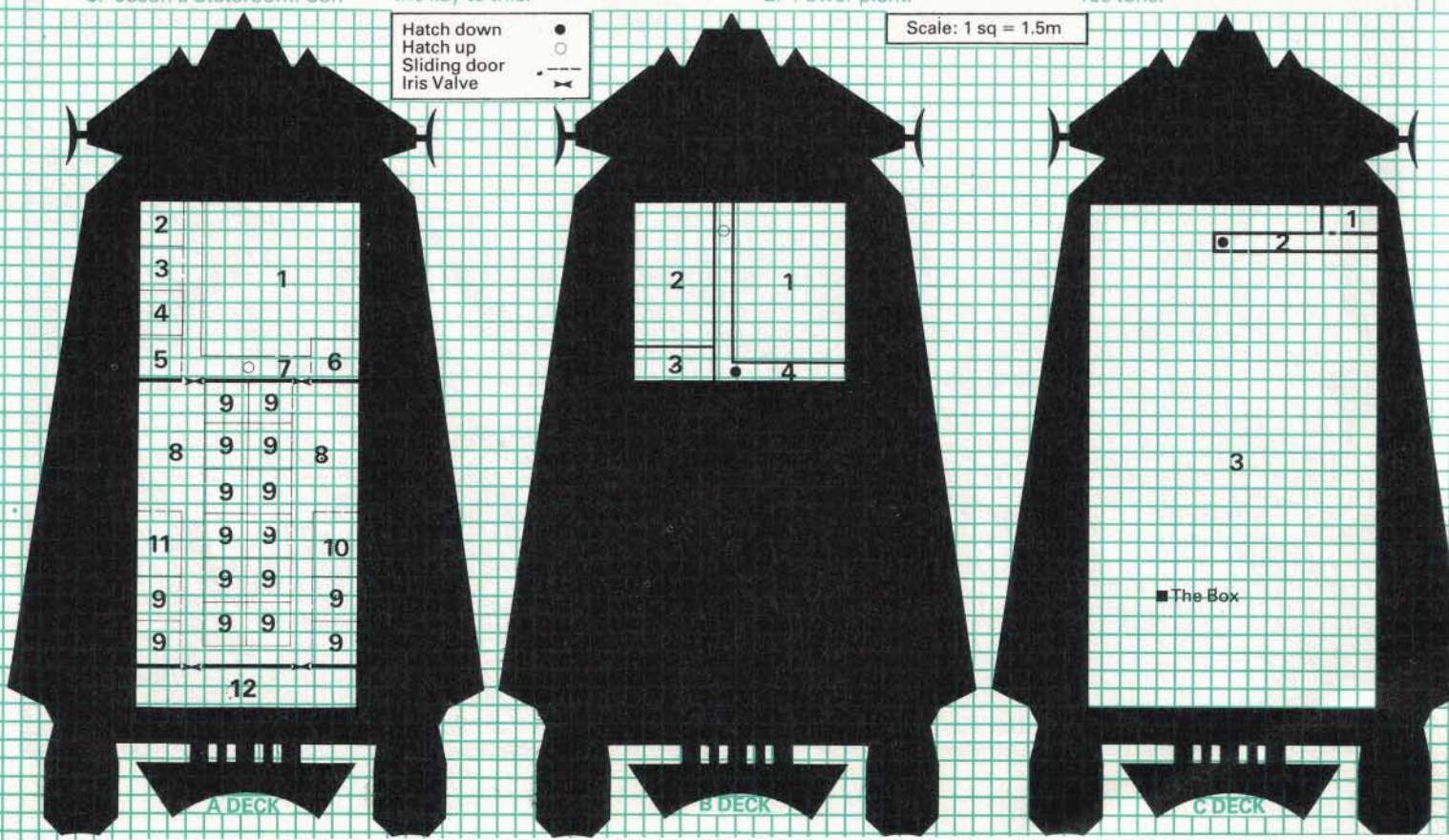
Note. Areas 1-7 on A Deck are 'crew only' areas, entrance to them being gained via iris valves controlled by ID cards held by the crew.

B Deck, Engineering.

1. Jump drive.
2. Power plant.
3. Manoeuvre drive.
4. Access Corridor. A hatch leads up to A Deck, area 7 and one leads down to C Deck, area 2.

C Deck, Cargo and Low Berths

1. Low berth section. 10 low berths contained here.
2. Access Corridor. Hatch leads up to B Deck, area 4.
3. Hold. The main feature is 'The Box' (qv). Cargo capacity is 180 tons.



BALANCING ACT

Why Rules and Role-Playing Don't Mix

by Mike Lewis

Playing characters with a strong emphasis on developing a three-dimensional identity is much lauded amongst 'serious' role-players. The use of realistic, long and complex rules is also considered the height of real role-playing. This attitude is strange since one directly opposes the other – role-playing is hampered by realistic rules and realistic rules leave very little room for role-playing to develop. Thus, it is hardly surprising that many people find it difficult to achieve a true and satisfying atmosphere in a game. To put this problem quite simply, the rules get in the way.

Consider the situation in a typical role-playing game. An event has just occurred which needs some form of adjudication, the rules are brought out, consulted with the correct air of reverence, dice are rolled and the outcome of the decision announced. Yet the moment this happens the atmosphere which has been carefully built up during that session, and which derives from the role-playing aspect of the game, is destroyed. The moment a player is asked to roll a die or the GM pauses to consult the rulebook, the players are taken from their fantasy world and thrust rudely back into the real world. At this point, the whole game experience created by the interaction between GM and players ceases, and the game becomes just that – an excercise using bits of paper, dice and metal figures.

The more realism and accuracy a rules system strives to create, the more complex and detailed the rules become, the harder it is for the GM to remember all the necessary rules, and the greater the rules system intrudes into the game. One possible solution is to reduce the game system to something on the level of *Tunnels & Trolls,* or *Fighting Fantasy* – simple rules which are easily remembered and quick to play. Is *T&T* a better system than, say, *Chivalry & Sorcery*? No, they are both very unrealistic, as they both attempt to quantify human characteristics and abilities in terms of dice rolls.

Surely, the best method of gaming then, is to have no rules system. Nothing would interfere with the players' enjoyment of the game and the GM would be saved a lot of time and trouble (not to mention money!) over the rules. The GM makes decisions based on a 'free kriegspiel' system – basing the outcome of any action upon his judgement of an appropriate result and his world view – an ideal solution, easy to adjudicate, with no arguments over the 'rules' and with everybody happy.

Unfortunately, this 'ideal' system (in all but a few exceptional cases) would prove to be impossible to put into practice, simply because of the weight of responsibility it placed on the Game Masters' shoulders, and the feelings of suspicion which are bound to arise. How can the players trust all the GM's decisions? How can they be sure that the GM is unbiased and that he will rule equally in all cases? Would you like to face an angry player who demands to know why his character has just died – all he did was to fall off a cliff! When Harry's character did that last week, he lived through it. How do you explain to him that you've since realised your last decision was wrong, and that your world view has now changed? Or that you made a mistake last time – without your players losing faith in you GMing abilities? Then there are the 'rules lawyers' – the players who insist on quoting you chapter and verse verbatim from the rulebook. 'You can't do that! It says on page 234, paragraph 6, under Exceptions that . . . ' Under a 'free kriegspiel' system they would question every decision: these players would be the death of most GMs!

There has to be a mid-point, however, somewhere between the two extreme approaches, which offers a chance for enhanced role-playing, yet includes enough hard-and-fast rules to keep the average player happy. This intermediate state can be achieved in any game, under any games system, simply by experimenting a little, and altering the way in which rules

decisions and the players' actions are handled. Here are a few suggestions:

1. If there is a very high chance of character success in a given situation, allow that successful action to take place without a die roll. This may sound like heresy – what are die rolls and rules for, if not to limit the characters from doing things? I am not suggesting that you should allow all characters with more than a 50% chance an instant success, that would bias things far too heavily in the players' favour; just if the situation is a mundane and ordinary one which only slows down the game (eg looking for firewood, attempting to light a cigarette, etc).

It is not advisable to use this option when the success or failure of an action is particularly important to the campaign, or the character concerned. A side effect of this is that it does give player characters a slightly better chance of survival – not always a bad thing!

2. If you are unable to remember a rule during the middle of a game which is flowing particularly well, and is building up a good atmosphere, do not break the mood by checking up on the rules. Instead, trust in your own judgement, taking into account all the factors of the situation and your own knowledge and experience of your campaign. Once you have GMed even just a few sessions, you pick up an instinctive feel for the game and rules system, which will allow you to make snap decisions in a realistic fashion.

Note, however, that this should not be done when a player character is in danger of dying, as the player will tend to harbour ill feelings if it turns out later that your judgement was wrong! Although this idea does sound a little like cheating, or even just sheer laziness, on the GM's part, it isn't; the rules are not that important a part of the game that they cannot be ignored once in a while. Strict rules playing belongs in games like *Monopoly,* not in the free and open-ended experience that forms a role-playing game.

3. Try not to rely too heavily on dice and random encounter tables for your encounters during an adventure. While a random encounter can liven up a flagging games session – there being nothing better than a quick fight to arouse people's interests – you can get too much of a good thing! If the rules say you should roll for encounters once every three turns, try not to take them too literally. Several times I've seen parties of adventurers surrounded by wandering monsters who seem to swarm in from every direction. All this type of constant encounter really achieves is to distract the players from their current task in the game, to slow the game down and to eventually create a very muddled and unstructured campaign.

I have always found it better to prepare a set of pre-planned encounters, and to introduce these at appropriate points in the course of play. This also enables you to deliberately distract the players from the main part of your campaign if you have a strong reason to delay them. Random encounters then become sub-plots, which can introduce characters to new and important NPCs, reward them with items they will need in their main quest, or split the party up and set them against each other. If used carefully and with some consideration, random encounters can add much more to an on-going campaign than the mere thrill of a quick fight with a wandering monster.

4. React to your players. Role-playing is a two-way exchange; interaction on several levels is essential between the players and the GM. Do not be afraid to alter the scenario you are running in response to some player action. If the adjustment produces a better game, and a more satisfying and enjoyable outcome for the players, then it is worth doing – even if it means radically altering your plot. In the same way that rules can be ignored, amended or even rewritten, so commercial scenarios can be altered.

Rather than following a scenario plot exactly, always be on the look-out for tie-ins between the scenario and your own group of player characters. If you are playing a game such as *AD&D* which uses character classes, then the types of character in the player party are going to have a major effect on the scenario's outcome. Some scenarios may have a vital clue in them, or an essential piece of equipment, which can only be reached by someone with the skills of a thief. So, any party without a thief present is going to have problems in playing through the scenario, or is going to miss out on a lot of the action and enjoyment to be gained from it. Adapt the scenario ideas, content and difficulty to match your party. It isn't just character powers that are important, also objects, religions and any phobia they may have. It is also important to be able to adapt the scenario in mid-game – if the players think of a clever and ingenious way through a trap or 'dead-end' you must be able to think on your feet and react. Spontaneity is a vital part of all good role-playing.

5. In even a small group of players, many GMs adopt the idea of each player taking an action in turn, so that each member of the group gets to do something in the game. This is not a bad idea, groups can easily be dominated by one or two loud and vociferous players who will tend to get an unfair share of the action. Yet, the very concept of a fixed turn for each player goes against the goals that an FRP game is trying to achieve – that of an intricate and detailed narrative, a 'living novel' as some have called it. Allotting a discreet action to each of the player characters in order reduces the game flow to that of a boardgame. Each player can make a move, roll the dice and then they sit around until it is their turn to 'go' next. You simply cannot create a satisfactory, flowing role-playing atmosphere within such artificial constraints.

The answer is to let the game progress naturally, with each player only taking an action when they have to, and when it is realistic for them to do so within the game. This can be extremely difficult for a GM to achieve without a central player character dominating all the action and players with, perhaps, less powerful characters being left out. No-one likes sitting around watching someone else have all the fun and make all the decisions. In order for this system to work effectively, producing a smooth flowing game without discreet intervals of time, and yet to involve all the players present, or to make them feel they are involved, takes a lot of practice and puts a lot of pressure on the GM. You must be aware of all your players at once and try to divide your time between them equally. If a player is just sitting there and looks as though they are feeling left out, make them join in. Use an NPC to drag them into the game, to force them to make a decision.

If the players are no longer just sitting around the table waiting for their next turn, idly playing with dice, spilling beer cans, etc, but are actively involved in the game all the time, because they can never be sure when they have to make a decision, the game flows better and creates a greater sense of atmosphere.

The above points are only a few suggestions which arise from my own experience of running games. There are many more ways of removing the rules from the game, and creating a more realistic role-playing feeling. One possible idea is to have a form of 'secondary GM' who would be responsible for the NPCs within the game and it would be he or she that role-played them rather than the GM. This would take a fair amount of work off the GM's shoulders in that he no longer has to concentrate on role-playing his NPCs, but can concentrate on the game's flow and the players' actions. While the NPCs could be improved by having a good role-player devote all of their attention to the various roles required, adding depth and feeling to what are often little more than names, this would require a lot of work between the GM and his 'NPC master', as they would both have to work closely together to keep the campaign flowing realistically without inconsistencies between their two approaches. Yet it would be a great challenge to most role-players to play the parts of all those characters, and I feel it would definitely benefit a large group by freeing the GM from a lot of unnecessary work.

I have actually run games of my campaign Gilkemmen in a totally 'free kriegspiel' fashion, the most notable being a run at *Stabcon IV* a couple of years ago. It has proven to be successful, the major problem being character/player identity. The players seemed to find it hard to relate to just a character description of their characters, without the usual characteristics and other stats. Hit points appear to be a major problem area; few players like being told that their character is 'feeling weak' without them knowing exactly how many hit points they have left. It's a survival instinct I suppose!

Try to experiment with your own rules system. If you avoid slavishly following rules and the dictates of others then you'll find your games much more enjoyable and fulfilling. You'll even find them more fun – which is why we play the things, isn't it? □

The Sahuagin Heel

An AD&D Adventure for 6-8 Characters of Levels 2-4 by Graeme Drysdale

PLAYERS' INTRODUCTION

You have arrived in the city of Corrun at dusk, just before the gates of the city are closed for the evening. Seeking shelter for the night you have ended up at the Jolly Sailor Inn, an inn with a reputation for good food and a friendly atmosphere. The clientele, in the main, consists of sailors, but most are too preoccupied with drinking, eating or their games of cards and dice to pay much attention to strangers. Having arranged room and board with the innkeeper, you settle down at a table to relax in the general bonhomie of the inn.

A few yards away, seated at a table in one of several booths, two men and a dwarf appear to be arguing over a business arrangement. Out of natural curiosity you pay closer attention to their conversation and, from the little amount you are able to hear, the men appear to be refusing considerable offers of money – upwards of 3000gp! Apparently the dwarf wishes the men to take a precious cargo of silks across the sea to another merchant, but the men infer that there is some danger between the two coasts that even 3000gp cannot buy passage through. They eventually leave the dwarf alone, but not before you believe that the dwarf has noticed your eavesdropping; therefore, preempting any further move on his part, you approach his table and offer your services.

The dwarf is wary at first, and suspicious of you having overheard his conversation, but soon your enthusiasm convinces him. He sits down, addressing the whole party, and realising you are strangers to the city, tells you the following story:

'Nigh on ten score years ago, a bold knight of the northern realms of Thoris entered the then small town of Corrun, to seek audience with his highness, Prince Imras. The knight, who called himself Escátha, bore tidings of a massive horde of creatures gathering at the foot of the Barren Hills in the humanoid kingdom of Jarcuth. News had reached him that this host was marching west against the town of Arlcon, to wreak devastation and chaos on the inhabitants there, and to plunder the silver mines to exhaustion. After that, Corrun would be sure to follow.

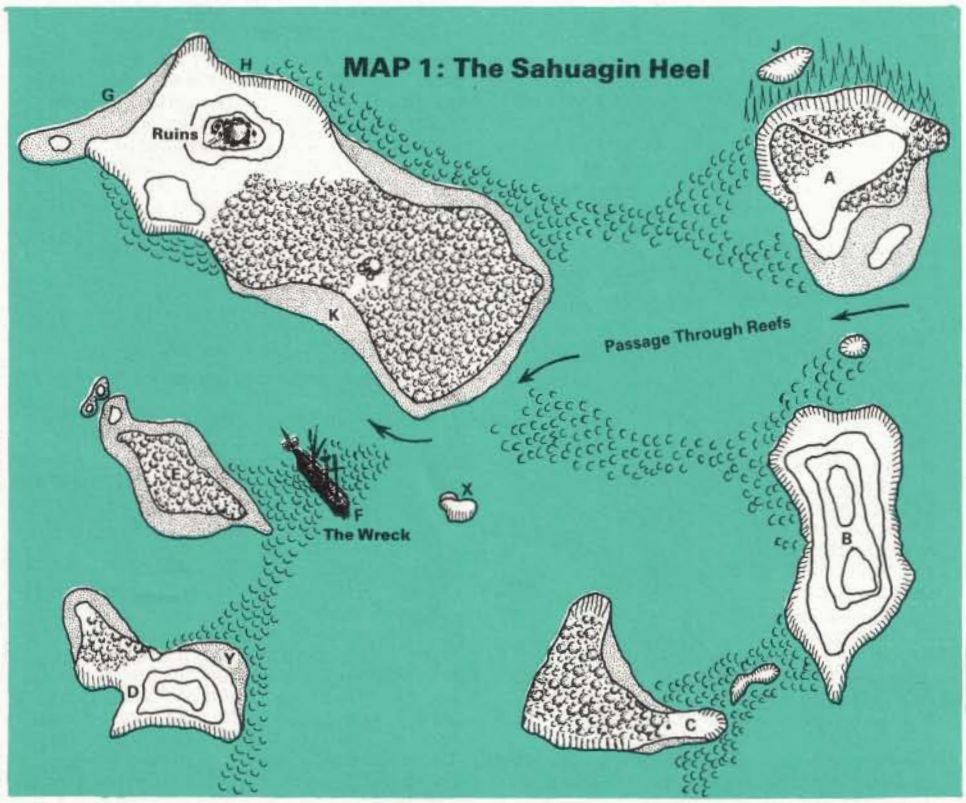
'The prince was dumbfounded, albeit he had been expecting such an advance for years. Bidding Escátha his greatest thanks, and rewarding him with gold, which the knight flatly refused, he began to muster his arms and march north-east to reach Arlcon before his assailants did. The prince had managed to assemble some 1000 warriors, barely enough for the job. And then, for some unaccountable reason, he thought of the young knight Escátha, and realised that here was the key to his victory, and without him all else might fail.

'The army of Corrun arrived in Arlcon at dusk and prepared barricades and defences, awaiting the onslaught of the humanoid forces. Watches were set night and day, and beacons and fires were kept alight during the dark hours, as this was the time the forces were at their most fearful, and when they would surely strike.

'And so when the inevitable occurred, Arlcon was fully prepared. Yet, they were severely outnumbered, some 10-1, and soon defeat looked imminent. It was at that time, when their forces had been pushed back into the heart of the town, and more than half of them had been slain or maimed, that a fierce white light erupted from either side of the hills, a little less than a league away. And as these lights burned brighter and brighter, a multitude of figures could be seen pouring from the hillsides. At their head rode a man in white, shining in the firelight, and where he rode, death followed. Behind him came his minions, crushing and slaying foe after foe in their wake, until the attackers began to flee in panic and rout. Stragglers were struck down or fledged with many arrows – few escaped with their lives.

'And the man in white came unto the prince and knelt before him. And from his head he lifted his scarlet plumed helm and raised his face to the dark night sky. His ice-blue eyes seared and his fair locks fell about his shoulders; he stood. And poised as an ivory figure, he spoke:

'I am Escátha the White, Paladin of Ishtar, and these are my followers who aid me in my destruction of evil. I am honoured to have served you this night, where you would have surely failed. I ask no reward, nor do my men, for our reward has already been gained in what we have achieved. I do ask, though, O prince, that you consider one proposal I



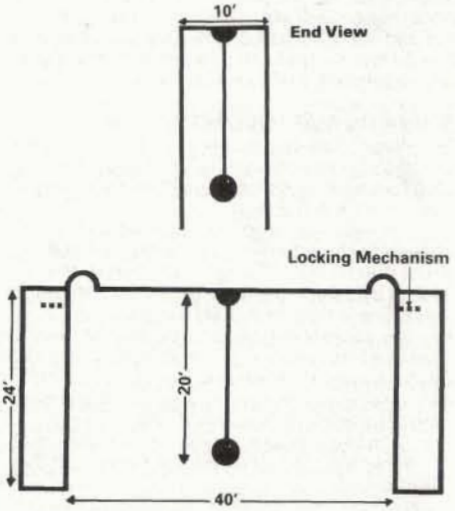


FIGURE 1: The Pendulum Trap

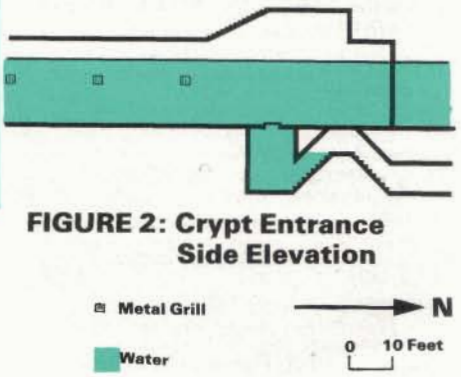


FIGURE 2: Crypt Entrance Side Elevation

have to offer – that I may come into your service and serve you until I should die, or until Orcus takes my soul. Your guards have been slain and your captains crippled. I ask that you accept me as your companion so that I may set about and reform your state to its original capacity.' And with that the prince nodded rapidly, but was, nevertheless, totally speechless.

'So Escátha settled in Corrun and began his reformation of the lands as one of the prince's right-hand men. As one of his missions he deemed it desirable to seek out and eliminate a hostile colony of sahuagin that had established itself off the coast and were terrorising the sailors and merchants that traversed that area. Thus, Escatha set off with his warriors to discover the lair of the sea-devils and to rid the ocean routes of their peril. Contact was maintained between him and the prince, though through methods unknown. And it was said that after two weeks Escátha managed to locate an insignficant outpost on the edge of the sahuagin territory on a small group of volcanic islands, unmapped by the city dwellers, but later known as the 'Sahuagin Heel', as it was the utmost limit of their territorial region. The last the prince heard from Escátha was that he was to penetrate the area the following morning; neither he, nor any of his followers, were ever seen again.

'Numerous quests and expeditions were attempted to totally destroy the sahuagin colony, yet none completely succeeded. Today, they still thrive out there, only in small numbers, but sufficient to threaten our now prosperous trade routes. Few captains will steer their ships within leagues of the islands, their dread is so great. My difficulties are caused by the fear of old legends which terrorise the sailors, rather than actual danger. Though I see you are no masters of ships, your hearts are bold and adventurous. Perhaps if you were able to clear the islands of any remaining sahuagin, which I suspect are now few in numbers, it may restore my faith to the sailors and allow that sea passage to become more accessible. I will stake 400gp on your safe return from a successful mission, and I'm sure I could raise more from other merchants. If you are interested, I will arrange matters further.'

DUNGEON MASTER'S NOTES

The dwarf may be persuaded to part with up to 700gp for the voyage, but no more. He will also be unable to raise more than 350gp from the other merchants.

Once the characters have (hopefully!) agreed to the situation, the dwarf will tell them that he will arrange transport to the island, and such transport is theirs for one week. It will take two days to reach the islands, so they will have three days to investigate before returning. The ship may be hired out for longer than a week, but the characters will have to pay the extra amount (10gp per day). The crew of the vessel will have no action in the venture, however, and they will probably moor their vessel someway off the islands.

The dwarf will provide the characters with 20gp each to equip themselves with food and other necessities, and will also give them a wap to show the location of the hidden reefs around the islands. They will be leaving in two days time.

THE VOYAGE

The Swallow

The Swallow is a small galley, owned by the master Alago. The crew consists of 40 sailors, 4 mates, 2 lieutenants, and the master, totalling 47. Alago is a good captain, which ensures his crew's morale is high (−20% on the dice).

Alago: AC4; HTK36; LVL6; Fighter; STR:15; INT:9; WIS:12; DEX:12; CON:15; CHA:16; Longsword, +1 Chainmail. Lieutenants (×2): AC5; HTK11,13; LVL2; Fighter; LN; longsword, scimitar. Mates (×4): AC7; HTK9,8,7,7; LVL1; Fighter; LN; longsword (×2), handaxe, spear. Sailors (×40): AC8; HTK:1d6; LVL0; LN (mostly); longsword, light crossbow, dagger.

THE SAHUAGIN HEEL (MAP 1)

The ship will anchor at point X, (Map 1), on the side of a small, uninhabited, barren isle of rock. A longboat, capable of holding eight people plus equipment, will be lowered into the water to enable the characters to explore the islands.

A. The reef to the north of this island is covered in thick, dense reeds and weeds of various types. Inhabiting the reef and the reed bed, quite invisible in their surroundings, is a colony of aquatic elves, 60 in all. They are generally friendly with other elves, neutral towards others. Recently, four of their clan were killed by fishermen, accidently believing them to be sahuagin, so at present they regard sailors with hostility.

60 Aquatic elves [*MM* p39]: AC5; HD1+1; AL N; trident and spear, 50% have nets. Treasure at DM's discretion. They keep 6 friendly dolphins [*MM* p29] as pets.

B. This island is without any vegetation and is the nesting ground of numerous cormorants, gannets and gulls. The cliffs are almost vertical for a height of 60 feet; there is no path.

C. This island is only inhabited by wild boar, brown bears, and giant spiders. There is a 30% chance, per turn, that the following are encontered (roll 1d10):

1–4 1-3 wild boars [*MM* p11] (there are only six on the island).
5–8 1-4 large spiders [*MM* p90] (there are 18 on the island).
9–10 1-2 brown bears [*MM* p9] (there are only two on the island).

D. This island is uninhabited apart from 7 crabmen [*FF* p21], the occupants of a small, sandy cave to the north, visible from up to a mile away. They will not attack the party unless: 1. the party numbers less than six; 2. the party attack them; 3. they can see some silver on one or more of the party. Piled at the back of their cave and consequently concealing a door there, is a heap of silver coins and treasure: 1572sp, 12 ingots of silver worth 10gp each, a silver bracelet engraved with the word 'Angir' (totally meaningless), and worth 12gp, a silver vial of *Holy Water* (the vial is ornate and worth 25gp), a silver holy cross, a plain silver ring (10sp), and 2 silver arm bands, worth 3gp each.

The Crabmen Caves (Map 2)

1. The door at the rear of the cave is oak, iron bound and studded, and has a defensive point value of 3. It is 3' by 7' and strongly built. Chances to open the door are halved, as the hinges are old and rusted solid, and sand clogs the base of the door.

The door opens out into a dark, damp passageway. Ahead, a shaft of light illuminates the centre of a dusty chamber. There is a 35% chance that the light will pick out strands of thick, giant cobwebs, which are stretched across the passageway. Otherwise, the characters will stumble into the webs and be attacked by three large spiders, one of which will be lurking above and surprise the party on a 1-4 on a d6. 3 large spiders [*MM* p90] AC8; HD1+1; HTK6,8,9; bite plus poison. Apart from a few copper and silver pieces the only item of value is a wrought silver necklace, worth 80gp, of which there is only a 15% chance of finding, unless the room is *completely* searched and the cobwebs burnt.

The light emerges from a rough 5 foot hole in the ceiling, 25 feet up. Climbing to the edge of it may result in the earth around it giving way (90% chance), whereupon 2d6 damage will be sustained. The hole leads up to the island above, and comes out beneath the bole of a hollow tree.

2. The Pendulum Trap (*Figure 1*). If any character steps onto the area between the two pillars, they will set off the pendulum trap. The pendulum is a ball of iron, three feet in diameter, suspended from the ceiling by a thick, metal chain, uncuttable and unbreakable. When not in use, the ball of the pendulum locks into the ceiling at either end of the pillars, but whilst someone still stands between the pillars, the locking device contracts into the rock. The pendulum maintains constant motion whilst swinging, and thus does not slow or lose height due to air resistance. Characters in the vicinity of the swinging ball (shown by the dotted line) must roll below DEX on a d20 to be deft enough to jump aside before the ball reaches them; those rolling equal to, or up to two above DEX receive a glancing blow for 2-7 points of damage; those rolling greater than this receive a direct blow for 3-18 points of damage. A true 20 is always a direct blow.

The ball takes 8 seconds to pass through one complete cycle; at its lowest it is 4 feet from the ground; at its highest, 24 feet. Thus, characters under 4 feet in height will not be hit by the ball. It weighs approximately 18000 pounds.

3. If the pendulum is activated, a circular hole will spring open in the wall here, somewhat like the iris diaphram of a camera. It is 5 feet in diameter and will stay open for 3 turns before closing again. It may not be opened from the other side.

4. In this cavern is a circular, golden pool. Amid it stands a statue of a great being, some 20 feet tall. If any character touches the golden water, the statue will suddenly become flesh and blood, and will speak:

'Entombed forever in vilest stone,
The Lord of Air stands mute, alone.
Plea! Seek you the marble shark,
And from it's bowels, withdraw its heart.
Then chip my breast with that you find,
And watch my withered soul unbind.
So, go now; search the sands,
So I may return to my wasting lands.'

It will then return to stone.

The living form of the statue is Atomas, a storm giant [*MM* p45]. Atomas was entombed in stone by the shark god Sekolah after he interfered when the sahuagin began to settle in this part of the world. The only method of releasing him from his inanimate state is to tap him with the silver hammer located in the marble statue of Sekola which is situated in the temple (**90**). At once, the statue will begin to shatter and crumble, and springing from the remaining shards, Atomas will burst forth. The waters of the pool will then begin to seethe and surge, Atomas will boom, 'Come. Follow,' to the party, and dash off in the direction of the door, dodging the pendulum and crushing any remaining spiders in his wake. Any remaining crabmen will make for the nearest cover.

Standing on the beach, he will thank the party many times. For their assistance he will offer them a small dagger, merely a toothpick to him. Nevertheless, the dagger radiates an aura of magic, if detected for; it is *+1*. Atomas will then run swiftly over the sands, and dive into the water, shouting to the party not to return to the caves for any reason, and to flee the island. He will then disappear from sight.

Any character remaining in the cavern after Atomas has been released, will observe the water surge so greatly that it will begin to overflow. As soon as it comes into contact with the feet of any character loitering about, they will be rooted to the spot, and nothing short of a *wish* or *knock* spell will free them. The waters will then begin to flood the cavern, and the character, unable to escape, will drown.

5. Here dwell a colony of orcs who have learnt the art of living close to the sea. They are in league with the sahuagin, although the latter use them only as an available source of cannon fodder for their inland expeditions. An outlet to the sea to the north provides a means of escape should they be attacked.

22 orcs [*MM* p76] HD1; LE; longsword (×4), spear (×6), hand axe (×5), polearm (×3), heavy crossbow (×2), long bow (×2).
9 female and 15 young orcs – statistics not applicable.
Leader: AC5; HD1+1; HTK9; LE; longsword.
2 bodyguards: AC6; HD1; HTK8,8; LE; longsword and longbow.

Rooms a,b,c,d,e,f. These rooms are the orcs' sleeping quarters, sparsely furnished and containing nothing of real value.

Room g. This is the leader's room. It is relatively bare, yet he does keep a large, *heavily* locked iron chest in one corner of the room. This holds the treasure: 752cp, 337sp, 113ep, 35gp, 7pp, 3 gems of azurite (10gp each), and a fine brooch of gold and rubies – worth 320gp.

6. This is a large dining chamber. Long benches and tables line the walls and foodstuffs and barrels are piled to the north. There is a secret door in the west wall, unknown to the orcs, which links the caverns with the temple's labyrinth. There will be 2-8 of the male orcs in here if they are surprised. The place smells of decay and rotting flesh. There is a tattered purple curtain on the north-western section of the north wall.

7. This is a small temple dedicated to the orcish god Gruumsh. A statue to the north depicts a huge, one-eyed orc triumphing over the body of an elven hero. It is tended by two half-orc clerics of Gruumsh.

1) AC4; HTK18; LVL4; Cleric; LE; mace.
Spells: *Cause light wounds* (×2), *darkness, fear, silence 15'r, hold person.* 2) AC5; HTK12; LVL2; Cleric; LE; hammer
Spells: *Cure light wounds, light.* Both sport a gaping, empty left eye socket.

a. The other items of value are kept in a pouch on a bookshelf. This contains 29sp, 43gp, and two gems (jasper and obsidian) worth 50gp and 10gp respectively. Beside this pouch, sealed and tied with a blue ribbon, is a clerical spell of *find traps.*

b. An ivory statue stands on the mantlepiece, worth 25gp, and coins of various sorts are scattered around the room – total value of 66gp, 15sp.

E. Venturing onto the northern beach of this island, the characters will notice two human-like figures lying face down in the sand (marked Y). Closer inspection will reveal the figures to be long dead. As the party approach the bodies, they will be attacked by the slayer of the men, a giant crab [*MM* p15]: HD3; HTK20; claws (2-8/2-8). The crab will suddenly burrow out of the sand, surprising the party on a roll of 1-4 on a d6. The crab will fight until severely wounded, then it will make a headlong dash for the sea to avoid being killed.

The bodies are just skeletons. Lying beside the bodies are:

Body 1: A backpack, containing rotting sacks, rusted spikes, a flask of congealed oil, and a set of decaying, mouldy clothes. The backpack will fall apart at a touch. Beside the body is a rusted, notched longsword and a smashed wooden shield. Flakes of metal are scattered about, probably the remnants of a suit of armour. A helm still sits atop the skeletal head, rusted and dented. Fixed securely on the inside rim of the helm, sealed in a watertight, greased vellum wrapper, is a small, flattened piece of parchment. It bears the clerical spell *glyph of warding.*

Body 2: This body has no backpack, but a large belt pouch, which is split and looks tampered with (by the crabmen for the silver it contained). It contains 18cp and 2ep, plus a ring of copper, worth 10sp. Strewn beside the body is a shattered short sword and a dented, but rust-free small shield. The shield is *+1.* On the body's back is a withered and cracked quiver of arrows. All of the arrows except for two have rotted – these two are *+1* and *+2* respectively. In the right boot is a garnet studded dagger, worth 30gp.

F. Wedged firmly on the reef is the wreck of what was once a large merchant vessel. It was blown off course by a fierce storm, which few survived, and now lies half submerged in water. The ship may be searched but there is a 10% chance per round that the rotting wood will give way under the weight of 100 pounds or more. Characters falling through will sustain 1-6 points of damage and may (25%) become prey of the young giant octopus that dwells there in the submerged portion.
Young giant octopus [*MM* p75]: HD4; HTK22 (plus 4HTK per tentacle); 6 tentacles (1-2); break (1-6), constriction. In the octopus' sub-aquatic lair is 210gp, 23pp, and a small box of 810gp tiger's eye gems. If it is severely wounded, the octopus will retreat and ink.

A character may stay submerged under water for one minute before having to surface for air. In this time there is only a 10% chance of spotting anything of interest, and a further 30% chance of having insufficient air to investigate it. There is also a 20% chance of being unable to spot the object on the following dive.

If something is spotted, it will be one of the following (roll 1d6). Only creatures *2* and *4* may be encountered more than once, and only in the same location as before.

1. A skeleton, half buried in sand, wearing a pair of shining bracers (*Bracers of Defence AC6*).

2. The diver has encountered a patch of strangle weed [*MM* p93]: AC6; HD3; HTK14.

3. A small, rotted, wooden chest which contains some precious nuggets of ores:
18 copper (1gp each), 2 electrum (100gp each,) and one gold (200gp). The box looks as if it has been broken into at some stage (the crabmen again).

4. A skeleton [*MM* p87], lying face downwards with a dagger hidden under it. If it is disturbed, it will animate: AC7; HD1; HTK8; dagger (1−4+1). The dagger is +1 above *and* below water, so below water, no penalties are incurred. The skeleton will fight with the dagger; defenders may use those weapons indicated on page 56 of the *DMG.*

5. A cracked horn of ivory and gold. It has both ends sealed. Inside the horn, still dry as the cracks have been clogged by salt incrustations, is a small, six inch long sealed tube. It contains a very fine gold dust – *Dust of Appearance.* The dust may be blown from the tube to coat a 10'r area, or used on a maximum of four applications singly.

If the horn is repaired with a *mending* spell, it may be sold for 500gp. It is only worth 50gp in its present state.

6. A severed, skeletal arm sticks out from the sand. On the centre digit is an uncorroded electrum ring. It is a *+1 Ring of Protection.*

G. Moored 200 feet from the beach is a large galley. It belongs to a party of buccaneer raiders who have decided to investigate the ruins of the castle. There are 150 of them in all; 50 will have stayed on the ship. The buccaneers have not been detailed but are identical to those in the *MM* (p67) should the DM wish to roll them up. It is not intended that the characters attack the buccaneers; they are included to prevent the party from wasting too much time by searching the castle ruins, in which there is little of interest.

H. 25' below the waves is a small underwater cove. It is the lair of 6 koalinth [*MM* p52] HD1+1; HTK8(×2),6,5(×2), 4; spear '(1-6). They prey on many creatures of underwater origin, including the occasional aquatic elf. Their lair holds 520cp, 60sp, 3 gems, worth 10gp *each*, and a watertight scroll of *dancing lights* (MU).

J. In the stone on the southern face of the island are set four large brass rings. This is where the land elves moor their ships when they trade with the aquatic elves. They trade metals for gems and semi-precious sea stones, which they in turn sell to the dwarves of Corrun.

K. The area of woodland around the temple emits a strong aura of evil. This region is fatal to travel through; attacks are certain. Dwelling in the forest is an army of undead zombies. Any humanoid creature dying in the woods will become a zombie in 1-4 days unless a *remove curse* is applied. This is the result of an ancient curse laid on the area by a powerful sahuagin prince. The zombies are the only creatures to be found in the woods.

There is a 50% chance of being attacked by 1-6 zombies [*MM* p103] each round, 1-4 arriving each round thereafter. They will not stray onto the path or within 10' of the temple. Thus, the path can be considered the only safe method of gaining access to the temple.

The zombies are animations of those weak sahuagin who have been sacrificed to Sekola and their soul eaten by the god. They are, however, equal to zombies in all respects. They total 110 in all.

THE SHRINE OF SEKOLA (MAP 3)

The shrine of Sekola is hidden from view in the dense woodlands. Only the path may be observed, and this only from the bench or nearer.

The main gates of the temple are always left open. They are large, double doors, each 5' wide by 10' high. They are intricately carved with sahuagin and shark etchings, and are reinforced with brass strips and half inch brass studs.

The interior of the temple consists of a stone platform rising above troughs of 20' deep water on either side. At the far end of the platform, steps ascend to a circular dais on which stands a marble statue of the shark god Sekola and a marble, bloodstained altar, inset with manacles and chains. The statue is old, fragile, and brittle in places. A sharp blow with a blunt weapon will break a hole in the statue's side. If the hole is enlarged sufficiently, and the interior investigated, a small silver hammer will be found. This is the implement with which to free the giant, Atomas. The hammer is worth 25gp.

The temple is overseen by a sahuagin-human cross priest, and three sahuagin acolytes.

Priest: AC5 (due to scaly skin); HTK19; LVL4; Cleric; STR:14; INT:13; WIS:15; DEX:10; CON:11; CHA:5; LE; mace. Spells: *Cure light wounds, detect good, sanctuary, darkness, hold person, silence 15'r, resist fire.* His eyes are jet black, enabling infravision of 60', although he is sensitive to light and will fight at −1 in bright conditions.

Acolytes (×3): AC5; HD2+2; HTK14,13,10; LE; heavy crossbow and trident. Spells: *Darkness, protection from good,* and *command,* respectively.

It is the priest who sacrifices weak sahuagin on the altar, once per month, at night. If the temple is entered at night, there is a 3% chance that a service will be in progress. A service will be attended by 100 sahuagin, 3 guards of chieftain strength, a 6th level Cleric, and a prince.

In the south-west and south-east corners of the temples are two circular towers, 20' tall. They both have only a ground floor.

1. This tower is the abode of the priest. It is dry, but cold and dreary. Being a cross-breed, he does not need to submerge in water. He has very little of value. However, on his mantle are two gold plated candlesticks, worth 5gp each, and he also has a clerical *dispel magic* scroll in a drawer in his small writing desk. His only other wealth is a small leather pouch, hidden under his straw pillow, containing 107cp, 32sp, 11gp and 250gp gems, a jasper and a bloodstone.

2. The acolyte's quarters. It is filled with water, 10' deep, the level of which is parallel to the base of the door. Various rocks have been placed carefully to form a cavern in the far corner. The only items of worth are a set of amethyst prayer beads (40gp), and a copper

ring inset with a tiger's eye, worth 12gp.

The troughs either side of the platform are for the sahuagin worshippers to immerse in. The water is salt water. Various coins have been thrown randomly into the troughs. Any character wasting time collecting the coins will find 203cp, 27sp, 2gp, and a 10pg of haematite.

If the characters swim below the water, they will notice at every 20' interval, 2' square grills of iron (see cross-sectional diagram, *Figure 2*). The grills are hinged, and may be pulled open on a throw of the character's Bend Bars/Lift Gates percentage ×3. The character may then swim through and emerge beneath the platform. Surfacing will reveal a 5' air gap above the water. The 'passage' continues due north to beneath the circular dais, which is also hollow. Directly below the centre of the dais is another grating, which slides aside easily. This hole then descends into a square room, completely filled with water, with a set of steps rising upwards in the north wall. These ascend for 20' before breaking into air. The stairs then descend to a door at the bottom. A greater pressure is experienced in this portion, and it is this that maintains the water level from rising and subsequently flooding the dungeon.

THE SAHUAGIN'S LAIR (MAP 4)

1. The door leads out into a 10' wide corridor; 20' along, a set of steps descend from either side to ankle-deep water. From this, steps again descend to water 8' deep in a chamber 20' by 75'. The occupants of these waters are 6 electric eels [*MM* p36], 3 each side: AC9; HD2; HTK15,13,12,11,8,4; bite (1-3), jolt.

At the bottom of the water are various bones, mostly non-human, rusted weapons, a stone broadsword, and other useless junk. If the western cavern is searched thoroughly, there is a 30% chance of finding a pouch that contains a gem of onyx (50gp) and 15pp.

2. The passageway and southern edges of this room are a parapet with no railings along their edges. If any melee takes place here, a natural 20 will result in the character falling from the parapet to water 5' below, becoming prey to the electric eels.

Standing guard by the two northern doors are two men-at-arms. They are clad in chain mail and bear shields, heavy crossbows and longswords. Both are half-orcs. Their garments depict a malignant white shark against a black background. They will attack any who they are not acquainted with.

Ismus: AC4; HTK20; LVL3; Fighter; STR:17; INT:10; WIS:8; DEX:8; CON:15; CHA:7; LE; longsword, heavy crossbow. He guards the door to room 3.

Hâmut: AC4; HTK18; LVL2; Fighter; STR:14; INT:9; WIS:12; DEX:7; CON:18; CHA:10; LE; longsword, heavy crossbow, He guards the door to room 4.

Between them they have 49cp, 17sp, and Ismus carries a gold pendant inset with a tiny emarald gem, worth 80gp.

If the party look too strong for the guards to handle on their own, they will tap on the door behind them before entering the fray. If help does not arrive within two rounds, they must check morale each round thereafter it does.

3. The abode of Avrod, Evil Sorcerer of Sekola.

Avrod: AC8; HTK10; LVL4; MU; STR:8; INT:12; WIS:13; DEX:16; CON:11; CHA:11; LE; staff, *−2 Cursed Dagger*. Spells: *Charm person, detect magic, burning hands, mirror image, web*.

Avrod is more likely to surrender to a strong party than to try and battle with them. He is human, small and somewhat delicate. His robes are spun of fine silk, embroidered with a white shark. He is meek, cowardly, and generally pathetic. He will cast his *mirror image* spell before attempting any offensive enchantments.

His room is furnished in the style of a typicdal magician. Opposite the door is a bed and west of this is a desk with a lit lantern (*continual light*) standing on it. There are papers and manuscripts on the desk. On the west wall is a workbench with rows of shelves built above it, containing various odd items, such as herbs, bones, organs, roots, liquids, etc. Though none of the liquids are potions, there is a 10% chance per liquid drunk, that 1-4 internal points of damage will be sustained.

The workbench is cluttered with various laboratory research and experimental equipment. Adjacent to this is a fireplace. On the south and east walls are wardrobes, drawers and cupboards, containing clothes.

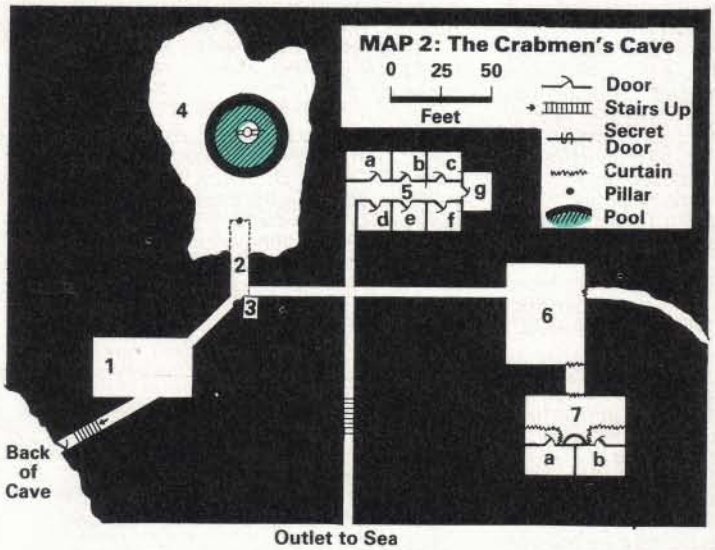
His wealth is on his person: 9ep, 25gp, 3pp, 2 gems: a moss agate (10gp) and a coral (100gp). He fights with a *−2 Cursed Dagger* (which he believes is *+2*) and a staff, which he wields at *−5* due to non-proficiency. The latter has the spell *Nystul's magic aura* cast on it. He also has a small golden key attached to a fine chain [see **(6)**].

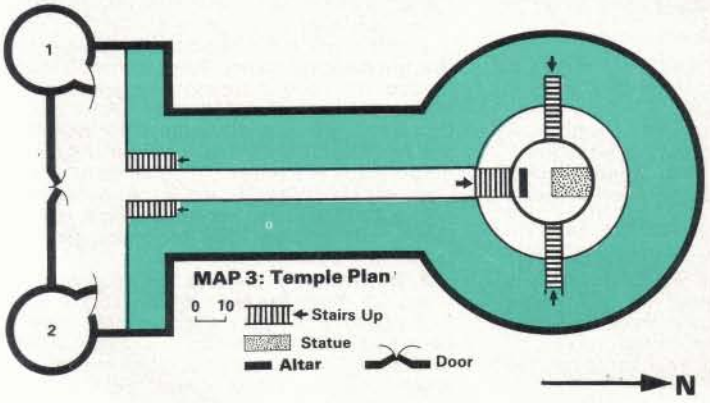
His spell book contains 6 1st level spells and 3 2nd level. It is cunningly concealed under a stone trapdoor beneath his bed. The trapdoor is only locatable by two finger holes in the floor.

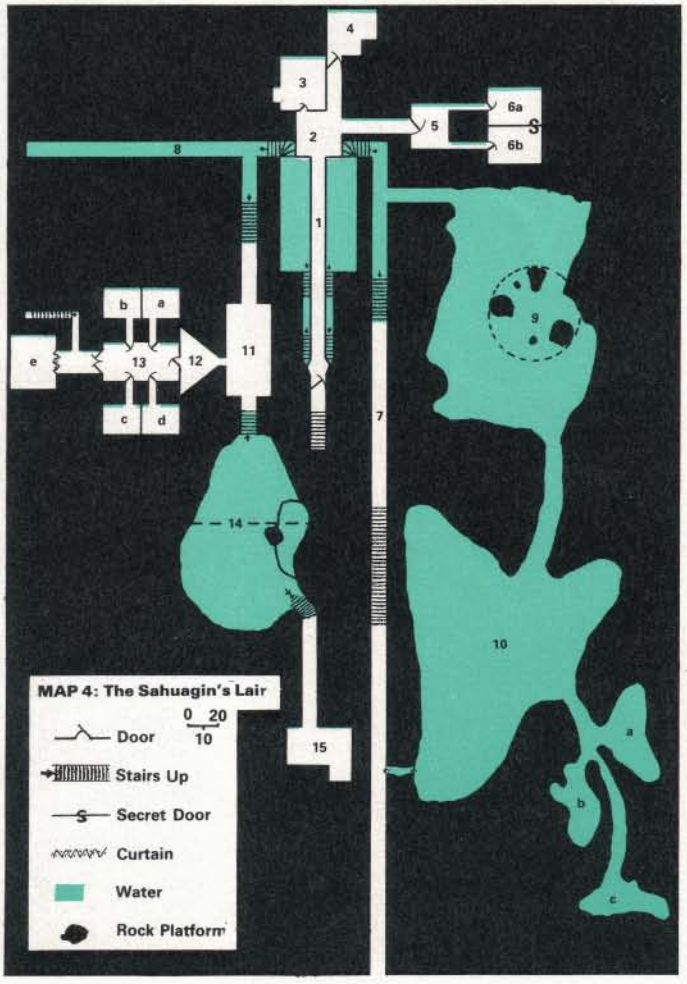
4. Herein dwells Mearan, Swordsman of Sekola.

Mearan: AC1; HTK34; LVL4; Fighter; STR:18(11); INT:6; WIS:6; DEX:17; CON:17; CHA:15; LE; long bow, *+1 Longsword, +1 Arrows* (×3).

Mearan is tall, dark, strong, handsome, but totally depraved and immoral. His room is lavishly furnished with a large four-poster bed, wardrobe, table, many rugs, cushions, pillows etc. Tapestries of sharks and sahuagin line most of the walls. There is a weapon rack on the south wall, holding a flail, a two-handed sword, a heavy crossbow, a dagger, two spears, a battle axe, and quarrels for the







crossbow. His longsword is +1 and glows a faint green when it is drawn. However, it is Lawful Evilly aligned, and has the following properties: Intelligence 12; semi-empathy; *detect good* in a 10' radius, Ego 3.

In his desk is a wooden box, unlocked. It contains 3 stones of haematite (10gp each), a gold earring (2gp), a *Potion of Healing*, a small gold key [see **(6)**]; and a scroll of *curse*. The scroll reduces strength, dexterity and constitution to 3 until a *remove curse* is applied.

Avrod and Mearan. These two humans are responsible for the control of the orc troops. They also spy on the mainland for the sahuagin, and help to plot raids and missions for the latter. The treasures in **6a** and the prisoner/s in **6b** are also under their guard. They may be found patrolling the complex.

5. Hung on the walls in this room are 10 tapestries depicting the sahuagin as strong and powerful beings. The tapestries are quite grotesque and vile in their appearance, picturing such scenes of the sahuagin eating their own dead.

6a. The door to this room is made of steel and has two keyholes one at the top and bottom. Avrod's key will fit one of the holes, Mearan's the other. Both keys must be turned simultaneously to open the door.

The room is carpeted with cream rugs. Numerous tapestries and paintings hand on the walls, much the same as those in **(5)**. A small idol of the god Sekola stands in the NE corner. Rugs have been placed in front of this statue. Three chests have been stacked against the south wall. The chests are locked and either of Mearan's or Avrod's keys will open them.

Chest 1. The lock of this chest is trapped with a poison needle which will operate if the key is not used. The victim must save versus poison or take 1-4 points of damage and faint for 1-6 rounds due to the excessive pain the poison causes. The chest contains: 390sp, 288gp, 27pp, 4 gems [a garnet (100gp), a jet (100gp), an amber (100gp), and an aquamarine (250gp)], and a Magic-User scroll of *knock*.

Chest 2. The lock on this chest is not trapped. It contains 759cp.

Chest 3. This chest contains various books, papers and parchments. The books tell of the sahuagin's rise to power, the corrupt deeds they have achieved, their numbers to date, their wealth, and almost everything about the present state of the sahuagin's hierachy. One book, titled 'Hierachy Through the Ages', is sealed with a gold clasp and hook, the former in the shape of a sahuagin head, and the latter, a hand thrust down the throat. The book may be opened by unclasping it. Inside it is hollow and contains a small package of a fine white powder, and a note. The note is written in sahuagin and common. The sahuagin states that one ounce of the powder when added to ¼ of a pint of water, will produce a toxic poison which causes 3-18hp of damage when imbibed. The common reads:

'Add one part to five parts water and stir for 200 heart beats. Tip the liquid into the mouth and swallow at once. The result will be astounding – all the drinker's wounds will heal instantly and he/she will feel like a new person.' [This is false].

6b. Built into the east and south walls are five cells. The cells are separated by newly replaced bars of steel, the door being of similar construction. All but one of the cells are empty. This cell contains a rather depressed lizard man: AC5; HD2+1; HTK9. Although he only speaks lizard man, he would clearly be grateful if he were released from the cell. He is due to be sacrificed soon.

The cell block is patrolled by Mearan and his guard who are 30% likely to be here if they have not already been encountered.

7. This passageway runs for over 1000' in this direction and then gradually begins to slope upwards. Sounds of booming can constantly be heard from above. The passage is damp, and slime and mould clings to the walls in most places. Water drips from the ceiling, forming pools of water here and there, never more thank ankle deep. It ends in a flight of corroding, roughly hewn steps. These run up to a secret door which opens out into the crabmen caves [**4**, room **(6)**]. Any occupants in this room will be surprised.

8. This passage is also damp and mouldy. The first 200' is ankle-deep water – characters should check on the diseased table to see if they have contracted anything. It then begins to slope upwards, exiting out beneath the old castle ruins through a hidden trap-door.

9. This natural cavern is filled with water 3' deep. In the centre (labelled by a dotted line), it is 8' deep. Occupying the room are 10 giant frogs [*MM* p41]: AC7; HD1-3.

At the bottom of the deepest part of the lake are the following. Only 1-4 of the items may be found:

1. A long, 4" diameter, sealed, cylindrical tube. It holds three *+1 Arrows*.

2. A sealed box 3"×4"×8", containing the finest tobacco and a clay pipe. It is extremely fresh and, although non-magical, will aid sleep and rest for a few days.

3. An iron box containing a set of six, inch cubed, dice and two packs of cards – one playing cards, the other tarot.

4. An ivory statue of a wolf with eyes of amethyst, worth 230gp. However, if it is taken away from water so that it becomes completely dry, it will begin to transform into a werewolf, which will attack anybody in sight. Werewolf [*MM* p63] AC5; HD4+3; HTK21.

5. A ring of copper in the shape of a belt, worth 5sp.

6. A body of a man in chain mail. It is relatively old, of the same party as those on the beach (*Map 2*, **5**). These were the survivors of the wrecked ship. The mail on the man is rusted and corroded, and his backpack has been split open and its contents spread about. There is also a rusty short sword, the remains of a bow and quiver and a battered and broken shield and helm. He was too large for the frogs to swallow and his armour prevented excessive nibbling. In his left hand, still clenched firmly, is a torch-holder of gold worth 45gp, and in a belt pouch is 12sp, 5gp, and one dose of a *Potion of Water Breathing*.

10. Herein dwell the remaining sahuagin. Waiting in readiness are four sahuagin guards of the strongest type: AC5; HD3+3; HTK23,22,21,17; trident, light crossbow. They will be surprised 1 in 6 and will have their crossbows loaded at all times. The waters here are about 4' deep. Reserves will arrive from the caves (a,b,c) if fighting commences.

Caves a,b,c: These caves are the quarters of the sahuagin [*MM* p84]. Dwelling in them are: 9 sahuagin males; AC5; HD2+2; trident, net and dagger. 12 sahuagin females, AC5; HD2. 4 hatchlings: AC5; HD1; dagger. Sahuagin Chief: AC5; HD4+4; HTK30; *+1 Trident*, trident.

The sahuagin chief is a mutation with four arms. He is thus able to employ two tridents simultaneously.

The caverns a-c are watery and dark. The floor is littered with bones, rocks and other debris. One has a small statue of Sekola in it which is worthless. Each cave has 1-3 eggs buried in the sand. In cave c, partially buried in the sand is a *+2 Longsword*. The longsword has a white hilt and scabbard engraved with holy words. It belonged to Escátha, who perished here.

11. This room contains rotting and splintered barrels of stale water, salted meat, grain and various rotting vegetables. Most of the barrels have been stripped of their iron rings so that the contents have been spread across the floor. There are, however, two stoppered, ceramic flasks, containing freshwater, still in good condition. The passage in the west wall is inadequately concealed, as if it may be used quite frequently, and is 50% likely to be casually noticed and definitely discovered if the room is searched.

Standing near the south of this room, munching contently on a piece of old metal, is a rust monster [*MM* p83]: AC2; HD5; HTK31.

12. The Conical Guillotine Trap. The entrance to this room is 5' wide. Any character gaining access this way is liable to become a victim of the trap.

The trap consists of two wooden planks, fixed to the southern and northernmost walls, 4' from the ground. Lying along these planks are two guillotines. These guillotines are connected by a series of pulleys and weights so that, as a character steps through the eastern opening, the guillotine will swiftly thrust forward and disembowel him. The pressure plate on which the guillotine activates, however, works only 50% of the time, and when it does not operate, the trap will remain motionless. Characters caught in the path will sustain 2-20 points of damage. Those under 4' in height will not be struck. The trap returns to its original position instantly.

13. This is the lair of another colony of orcs who are of the same tribe as those in feature **4** part **6**. There will be 5 male orcs to a room except for e) which belongs to the chief and his two guards only. The women and children have not been detailed as they will attempt to escape up the stairs to the north if any fighting starts.

Orcs (×20): AC6; HD1; axe and short bow (×5), longsword and spear (×5), axe and light crossbow (×5), axe and spear (×5).
Bodyguards (×2): AC4; HD1; HTK8,8; longsword and longbow.
Chief: AC4; HD1; HTK8; longsword.

14. This unevenly shaped cavern is filled with water 10' deep. Moored to the east of the entrance is a small rowing boat, capable of holding two. The characters may attempt to cross the water in this vessel. However, halfway across the cavern, enscribed on the wall, is a red arrow pointing vertically downwards. Beside this, written in sahuagin, is 'Beware! Teleport! Speak the verse of Sekola to pass.'

The verse of Sekola, which must be pronounced in sahuagin or common, is:

Queen of the ocean,
Goddess of sea,
Hear my words
And pass-by me.

This will negate the *teleport* for ten rounds. There is no such barrier on the return journey.

Any character attempting to cross the *teleport* region (which stretches from the water level to the cavern floor, defined by a dotted line on the map) will produce the following effect: all non-living matter on the person and in the boat will be teleported back to where the boat was originally moored. Thus, the characters rowing will suddenly find themselves floundering naked in the water without any weapons or equipment! They will then fall prey to the 2 lacedons [*MM* p43] that inhabit the area: AC6; HD2; HTK14,11: Other means of pasing without triggering the *teleport* are: *fly, teleport, dimension door, levitate, limited wish, phase door, wish*.

15. This room emits a strong aura of evil. It was constructed by the sahuagin as a healing room for their people. Beds and mattresses line the floor, though none are occupied. Any evil person resting in this room will gain 3HP back for each day they remain there; any good person entering the room will sustain 3HP of damage for each round they remain in there!

In the southern alcove, 85gp (in all types of coins) have been scattered on the floor, above which hang a bow and quiver. These weapons belonged to Escátha the paladin, and the sahuagin believed that if they placed them in this room it would rid them of their undeniable goodness. However, their notion did not succeed. The bow is a *+1 Longbow* and the quiver contains 20 *+1 arrows*. The money on the floor is donated by those using the room's facilities for fear of Sekola's wrath should they leave the room without paying for her hospitality. □

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Starbase *is an alternate monthly column for* Traveller *enthusiasts, edited by Bob McWilliams.*

THE OTHER IMPERIUM

Civilian Organisations in Traveller

by Michael Scott

The Starbase *item in this issue reminded me of thoughts I had some years ago, early in the life of* Starbase. *On reflection things haven't changed that much. New organisations are a popular submission to the* Starbase *desk, but with few exceptions they tend to be of a military nature – 'special forces', divisions and departments (often secret) of the Army, Navy or Scouts. Such organisations are useful in* Traveller *adventures, but what about the 'other', civilian Imperium?*

All published adventures and magazine articles barely scratch the surface of such a large polity as the Imperium. There is enormous scope for every conceivable human (not to mention alien) institution, society and endeavour. The imaginative Traveller *enthusiast should try not to be channelled into the same old grooves such as saving the universe from Zhodani domination. Adventure plots do not have to be of galactic significance in order to work.*

In a future issue I will be returning to the subject of civilian organisations, with a set of examples and their use in adventures. As I see it there are two large bodies of possible source material – science fiction literature, which often provides ready-made or easily adaptable ideas, and the real world present and past, which of course suggests numbers of organisations required or at least possible in human society which can be adapted to the future. Human nature may or may not change through the millenia, but there is ample scope in the variety of worlds possible in Traveller *to incorporate virtually any idea – particularly in such a campaign setting such as* GDW's *Imperium with its 'loose' style of Imperial government (each world is left to get on with its own affairs within certain restrictions). It is important to match the type of organisation with the type of society, of course. There may be trading or government restrictions; ethical, moral or doctrinal taboos may be in force. It is unlikely, for example, that Michael's 'Intercredit' would be found on a world practising extreme communism or a barter system (other than at the starport). The Police Confederation would not be represented on worlds with low population and low law level (since there would be no police force in all probability). Conversely a few worlds may choose not to belong to an organisation. Worlds controlled by a mega corporation might be such a case, where corporation staff police look after their own affairs and ignore off-world records.*

And so to Michael's selection. If in the next month or so any reader cares to submit further organisations to Starbase, *I will consider them along with mine for the future issue on the subject. –BMcW.*

In addition to such well documented organisations as the Traveller's Aid Society and the Imperial Megacorporations, there are many other organisations which are large enough to span interstellar space and operate throughout the Imperium. Some of the more interesting of these are described below. While the examples given are all restricted to the Imperium, most of them have analogues in other political units.

Intercredit

Due to the time taken to transmit information between stars, most of the money carried between stars by individuals is in the form of Imperial currency, which is convenient but highly vulnerable to theft. Intercredit offers an alternative. For a subscription of Cr200 per year, any reasonably reputable person can obtain an Intercredit account and card. The card is the key to the whole system, as contained on it are all the details of the subscriber's account. For security, the information on the card is in a supposedly unbreakable code, and the card is keyed to the owner's genetic pattern and cannot be used by anyone else.

Using the card, the subscriber can deposit or withdraw money at any Intercredit facility. These are found at all A class starports, B class starports on worlds with population 5+ or tech level 12+ and C class starports on worlds with population 8+ or tech level 15+. They are not as widely available as most customers might wish due to the expense of establishing and maintaining them.

Should the card be lost or stolen, a replacement can be obtained from any Intercredit facility within four weeks. In the interim, the facility will advance living expenses to the subscriber.

(Referees may feel the Cr200 per annum to be too small a charge for such a deluxe service! They may wish to give some thought to some other reasonably simple fee system, such as Cr10 per transaction, that reflects the cost more realistically –Ed.)

The Imperial Police Confederation

Most planets in the Imperium are signatories to the Treaty of Deneb, under which the police of one planet will apprehend and extradite suspects wanted for major crimes on another planet. Given the vast number of planets in the Imperium, only the most major criminals, wanted for such crimes as mass murder are hunted beyond nearby planets. In game terms, for most major crimes roll 3+ (perhaps more in some cases) for the character who committed the crime to be wanted on nearby planets, DM−1 per parsec from the planet where the crime was committed. If caught, the character will be extradited by the first available transport, escorted by two police officers. (*The key point here is 'major crimes'. Bear in mind the cost of three starship passages out, and two back, to the extraditing planetary government –Ed*).

The Mercenary Monitoring Corps

This is an Imperial organisation which is responsible for ensuring that mercenary units obey the Imperial rules of war and the conditions of their tickets, and also for administering repatriation bonds. The MMC is administered by the Sector or Subsector Governor's office (ie a Civil Service duty). Normally an MMC detachment is assigned to both sides in a mercenary conflict. In extreme cases where the MMC is opposed by force, they can call in major Imperial military units to back them up.

High Passage

High Passage is an Imperial funded non-profit making corporation which issues the universally recognised starship tickets described in the basic *Traveller* rules (despite the name, it issues high, mid and low passages). While captains often sell passages on their own ships without the intercession of High Passage, it issues the only tickets recognised on all starships.

High Passage offices are found on all worlds with A or B class starports, and on worlds with a class C on 5+, class D on 7+ and class E on 10+. At these offices, starship tickets can be bought at the standard price or sold for 90% of standard price. Starship pursers who can show that the ticket was received in exchange for a passage can obtain the full value of the ticket. Cut-price ticket shops can often be found near High Passage offices on populous worlds, typically buying tickets for 92% and selling for 98%. (*But watch out for forgeries! Also note that some worlds even with A or B class starports may not encourage off-world travel, and offices would not be found there –Ed.*) □

THE TRAVELLERS
UMMM.... AHHHH... THAT'S A RELIEF - THE ATMOSPHERE'S BREATHABLE, BORIS?
YAH CÖPTÊN?
I WANT A COMPLETE ANALYSIS OF THE AREA; EVERY TREE, EVERY BUSH, EVERY GRAIN OF SAND, BUT MOST OF ALL... THE STUFF I'VE JUST STEPPED IN.
YAH CÖPTÊN.
"CAPTAIN'S LOG... erm... oh PHOTON, WHAT'S THE DATE MR. SPECK?"
"IT'S A TUESDAY - THE DAY YOUR SON DIED."
"WHY YOU COLD-BLOODED HALF-HUMAN BUM-BOIL SPECK!"
"I WAS MERELY STATING A FACT CAPTAIN. IF YOU CAN'T HANDLE IT THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM."
"WHY YOU-"
"COOL IT BEANS - SPECK'S RIGHT - AS USUAL."
CAPTAIN QUIRK - I'M PICKING UP SOMETHING -
WELL DON'T SEE ME ABOUT IT - SEE THE DOC. WHO ARE YOU ANYWAY - I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE IN MY LIFE.
OH I'M CLAREMONT - THE EXTRA? I'M THE GUY WHOSE JOB IT IS TO GET ZAPPED, STABBED, SUCKED BY SALT-EATING MONSTERS AND SPRAYED BY HYPNOTIC PLANTS.
BUT IT PAYS WELL, YEAH?
Charlton Heston impression "oh gehnddd..."
HOT **** JIVE CAP'N!
WHAT IS IT U-HU?
NO, NOT THAT ASWELL!
Stab
Spray
SUK SUK
JIM! JIM! THE EXTRA - HE'S STRAYED OUT OF CAMERA SHOT!
MY GOOHHDD! THAT MEANS -
I SEES SOME MAMMAS WITH UNCOOL THREADS DIGGIN' DERR BODS HERE, MAN, NO **** BABY!
MY GOOHHDD... TERRIBLY DEFORMED MINIATURES. WHAT ARE THEY SAYING BEANS?
IT'S ALL IN ADVERSE COMMENT JIM.
THEY'RE ALL FOLLOWERS OF THE GOD DOLE, WHO WILL CLAIM US ALL EVENTUALLY. SOMETHING ABOUT NOT BEING POPULAR ENOUGH, NOT BEING FUNNY... PREFERRING D+D OR A LETTERS PAGE...
LET ME TALK TO THEM..." WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS - WE COME IN PEACE - WE DON'T MEAN TO RIDICULE THE GAME - MERELY SHOW YOU THAT IT CAN BE FUN AND HUMOUROUS - D+D CAN CO-EXIST WITH TRAVELLERS!
DIDN'T GO DOWN WELL JIM - THEY'RE WAVING POLES AT US.
THAT'S NOT SO BAD.
READERS SURVEY POLLS JIM - WE CAME LAST REMEMBER - BELOW THE BLANK PAGE.
TRANSLATION SPECK.
HIGH TEMPERATURE FAECAL WASTE DANCING CAPTAIN. I'VE LOCATED A GROUP OF HUMANOIDS WEARING CEREMONAL GOWNS PROCEEDING IN OUR DIRECTION. I'M NOT LYING, INFANT.
WHA-?
Harry Harrison JAN 1986 ©
(WITH THANKS TO KEV McCANN - THE OF THE DEFORMED MODELS.)
THEY'RE GETTING UGLY - BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!
YEAH LET'S GET THE **** OUTTA HERE!
TRANSLATION CAPTAIN?
NOT NECESSARY SPECK. SCOTCH! GIVE ME IMPULSE POWER NOW!
I CANNAH DO THAT CAP'N! THE WARP DRIVE JUST WENT INTO ANTI-MATTER IMBALANCE AND THE PHOTON REACTORS PLAYING UP AGAIN AND TO TELL THE TRUTH YOU JUST CAN'T GET THE PARTS ANYMORE!
STAY WITH IT GUYS - I PROMISE WE'LL GET SOME ACTION NEXT MONTH.
DAMMIT SCOTCH, I NEED WARP-DRIVE IN 5 SECONDS!
BUT CAP'N - THE WHOLE THINGS STUCK TOGETHER WITH TOOTHPASTE AND BOGIES - SHE CANNAH TAKE IT.
2 SECONDS SCOTCH!
OCH - MAYBE IF I TWIDDLE THIS KNOB - OH WADDYER KNOW!
NEXT: "COME IN NO. 10, YOU'RE TIME IS UP!"

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RuneRites *is a bi-monthly column for* RuneQuest *enthusiasts, edited by Dave Morris.*

FORECASTING THE RUNES

by Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson

Prediction

Prediction is a sub-category of Perception skills, open to any character with a POW of at least 13. Rune Casting is a form of Prediction common to all *RuneQuest* universes; others exist (Pyromancy, Hieromancy, etc), and the referee can develop these along similar lines.

The Rune Casting skill starts at 0 (plus any modifiers due to INT or POW) and can be trained up to 15% if a teacher can be found. The sort of people who might be able to teach a character Rune Casting often travel in minstrel troupes or operate fairground booths. The problem with training is not really cost – it takes only an hour or so to instruct a character up to 15% level, and the teacher will probably ask only a few silvers for this. But it is not always clear when one has found a real Master (or Mistress) of the Runic art.

When a character wishes to use his Rune Casting skill, the appropriate roll is made by the referee. If the roll is successful, the referee selects the runes so as to give an accurate (but always vague) prefigurement of game events that he has planned. If the Rune Casting roll fails, the prediction is random.

Rune Casting takes the form of shaking tiny pebbles marked with the runes, then casting one down. This is done three times for a full prediction. The first casting is of an Elemental rune, and this indicates the underlying forces which pertain to the character's situation. The second rune cast is of Form, and it indicates the principal way in which events will influence the character. The Power rune, last to be cast, indicates the outcome of the prediction.

The interpretation of a Rune Casting is up to the player. The referee merely tells him or her which runes come up:

Darkness: Secret or unclear forces are at work. There is a suggestion of evil or hostility.

Water: Events and forces are set in a state of flux.

Earth: A solid and definite change will occur.

Air: Events now in the offing will be without lasting significance.

Fire: Forces from above (earthly superiors or divine agents) may be at work. Violent emotions have been stirred up. A chance for great gain or great loss.

Moon: Past deeds continue to operate in the character's life. A man who has committed evil acts may soon have to pay. Sorcery and ancient spirits may play a part in things to come.

Plant: The future is tied up with the character's profession or finances. Investments may grow or wither.

Beast: Not just animals, but also natural forces in general, may play a part. (Combined with the Water rune, for instance, it might suggest to a general that storms will hinder his troops – particularly if Stasis were next to come up.)

Man: The character's fellow men will be the executors of his fate. Will it be for weal or woe? Consult the other runes!

Spirit: Ideas and knowledge have a significant effect on the future. The character should examine his beliefs. More mundanely, there could be spirit combat in the next few hours!

Chaos: The entire casting is ill aspected. Unpredictable and sorrowful trends are at work. This is not a time to consider dangerous actions.

Harmony: There will be no drastic alteration.

Disorder: Things will change radically and it will be a long time before those affected resume their normal routine.

Fertility: There may be a birth, or the maturing of a worthwhile investment. At harvest time, the crop will be good.

Death: A single major event will cause permanent change. Fatality is not the sole instance of this; there may be a promotion.

Stasis: There will be a period of inertia.

Movement: There is likely to be a long journey, or news may arrive from afar.

Truth: Many secrets from the past will be unravelled.

Illusion: Things are not what they seem. Do not take events at face value.

Luck: Matters now under consideration will come to a head. There will be a time to gamble.

Fate: The prediction is sealed. Whatever is read is a Fate, possibly a Doom. No man can change what is decreed.

As a final note, we recommend setting an upper limit of POW×5% on Rune Casting. (Or make it POW×4%, or POW×3%. There is no reason for the players to know how accurate their predictions can be.) After using the skill twice in one day, a character drops 10% in accuracy for each subsequent casting.

The Four Parts of the Soul

A side-effect of active imperialism, of the sort practiced by the Lunar Empire, is the appearance of bizarre hybrid cults and beliefs. These sometimes gain favour among those who have travelled widely and been exposed to a variety of cultures – notably, soldiers, sailors and adventurers.

The belief that a man's soul has four parts began to gain favour in some distant Lunar outposts around the year 1617, probably as a result of the unusual teachings of some enslaved shamans. The idea appealed to well-educated junior officers whose intellectually-based faith sought some functional alternative to pure Red Moon doctrine.

The four parts of the soul are:

The Crystal Knife, which is that aspect of the self which deals with positive, aggressive action and the outward channelling of energy.

The Morning Mist, which is the passive, yielding principle – the individual's ability to be acted upon or moved by externals, to take what he experiences into himself and to learn.

The Obsidian Rock represents the individual's capacity to negate actions directed against him, to hold firm and not to submit or fall in the face of adversity. It is the concentration of 'self', the boundary separating the individual from the world around him.

The Fleeting Shadow recognises the need to negate even the Obsidian Rock, the self, in some aspects of the individual's life. It leads to awareness and the willingness to understand and to grow. It represents the transcendent, mystic element in the individual's nature.

These aspects are commonly ordered into two sets of complementary characteristics: Active/Passive and Outward/Inward:

	Outwardly Directed	Inwardly Directed
Active	Crystal Knife	Obsidian Rock
Passive	Fleeting Shadow	Morning Mist

The four parts of the soul are treated as 'skills' which the character can master through meditation. At the end of every two weeks in which the character has spent at least two hours a day in meditation, he rolls for each soul-discipline to see if he can increase it. The initial skill in each soul-discipline is derived as below: Perfecting the soul-disciplines enhances the character's relationship with the world. One effect of this is to enable him to learn more readily from experience. Any time that a character fails an increase roll, he has a chance equal to his skill in the relevant soul-discipline of making a reroll. This only applies if the character is at least 25% in the relevant soul-discipline, however. Each soul-discipline thus assists the character in developing certain skills:

Discipline	Associated skills
Crystal Knife	Attack, Oratory, all Manipulation skills.
Morning Mist	Defence, all Perception and Knowledge skills.
Obsidian Rock	Parry, all Stealth skills.
Fleeting Shadow	POW increase, the soul-disciplines themselves.

The soul-disciplines are sometimes referred to as 'the Cornerstones of the Self'. When all four are in balance, the character may go on to great things. Developing one discipline to the exclusion of the others tends to make for an unstable and ill-balanced nature. When all four disciplines reach 90%, the character automatically achieves Illumination (see *Cults of Terror*). □

Discipline	Characteristic	Characteristic roll 01-04	05-08	9-12	13-16	17-20	Each +4
All four:	INT	−10%	−05%	–	+05%	+10%	+05%
Crystal Knife:	STR	−05%	–	–	–	+05%	+05%
Morning Mist:	DEX	−05%	–	–	–	+05%	+05%
Obsidian Rock:	CON	−10%	−05%	–	+05	+10%	+05%
Fleeting Shadow:	POW	−10%	−05%	–	+05%	+10%	+05%

Fiend Factory *is a regular department featuring readers' monsters.*

THE NOEGYTH NIBIN

by Steven Prizeman

A new creature and an encounter for the AD&D *game from J R R Tolkien's* Silmarillion

NOEGYTH NIBIN (PETTY-DWARFS)

No Appearing:	1-8
Armour Class:	3
Movement:	10"
Hit Dice:	1-1
Treasure:	Individuals K, M; H,Q, R in lair
Attack:	By weapon or 2-7
Alignment:	Chaotic neutral
Intelligence:	Average to very

The noegyth nibin, or petty-dwarfs, are a dying race. Originally outcasts from dwarfish cities these once normal dwarfs regressed and changed – both physically and culturally.

When the elves first encountered this strange new race they hunted and killed them until they learnt better. The petty-dwarfs care for no one but themselves and have dealings with no others. They gain the same attack and defence bonuses as ordinary dwarfs when fighting orcs, trolls, etc, whom they hate, but against elves, the race they hate the most, they gain a bonus of +2 to hit. Although they will not attack elves on sight, it requires only the slightest provocation to cause conflict.

Petty-dwarfs are more dextrous and stealthy above ground than their underground brethren and surprise enemies one-third of the time. They are usually armed with short bows, axes and spears. Having lost their mining skills, petty-dwarfs cannot detect old/new, dangerous/safe stonework as true dwarfs do, but they retain infravision to a distance of 60'. Similarly, their resistance to magic and poison has decreased to the extent that they save against such attacks at only 2 levels higher than they actually are.

Noegyth nibin live in small family groups or clans. Any given community will never contain more than two-dozen members. The leader of any such group will be a fifth level fighter who will have 1-3 bodyguards of third or fourth level.

Noegyth nibin player characters may become fighters, thieves or multi-classed fighter/thieves and are unlimited in level progression in any of these. They must, however, subtract 1 from their Constitution and 2 from their Charisma (with regard to other races). They may also add 1 to their Strength and Dexterity, although they have a maximum Strength of 18/50. Petty-dwarfs speak their own language, that of other dwarfs, their alignment tongue and the common tongue.

THE HOUSE OF THE NOEGYTH NIBIN
(Based on the encounter between Turin and Mim the dwarf from the *Silmarillion*).

The players should find the house by either encountering some of the noegyth nibin and by being led by/pursuing them there. In any case the noegyth nibin will be hostile if threatened or if there are any elves in the party. If the party is not of a significantly larger size than the noegyth nibin and is hostile it will be attacked. If the noegyth nibin are clearly outnumbered or if the battle goes badly against them they will flee: if this is impossible they will surrender.

The entrance to their 'house' should be located at the back of a cave or in another similarly well-concealed place. Behind a strongly locked and/or secret door lies their living quarters. The house itself will be a fairly non-descript complex of living rooms, store rooms, kitchen and a communal room.

If the relations between the players and the noegyth nibin are cordial, they will be quite receptive to suggestions such as assisting the players on their quest, provided that sizeable amounts of treasure are promised. They will not countenance having to deal with their enemies.

The noegyth nibin will always stick together; there are few of them left, and most will be related to each other. The members of this community number nine souls.

DRURM: male; age 305; S:17; I:15; W:16; D:16; CON:10; CH:12(14); CN; Fighter/Thief; HTK38; AC1; 5th/6th level.
Personality: Proud, brave, determined.
Physical Appearance: Wizened but imposing.
Carries: Leather armour, shield, hand axe, dagger with scabbard, 2 darts, thieves' tools, 8gp, 10sp.
Notes: +1 to hit, +1 damage, +1 reaction/attacking adjustment.

Drurm led his small group of followers here many years ago. They have kept themselves to themselves, and know little or nothing concerning the surroundings that could help the players. If the players talk to the noegyth nibin they will only learn of their origins. Drurm has the following thievish abilities:

PP: 55%; OL: 52%; F/RT: 45%; MS: 47%; HinS: 37%; HN: 20%; CW: 92%; RL: 20%.
(Noegyth nibin thieves suffer a 10% penalty on their ability to read languages.)

RHIM: male, age 192; S:15; I:13; W:15; D:10; CON:13; CH:11(13); CN; Fighter; HTK 21; AC2; 3rd level.
Personality: Loyal, arrogant, foolhardy.
Physical Appearance: Ordinary.
Carries: Studded leather armour, shield, hammer, short bow, quiver of 10 arrows, throwing dagger, 5gp, 9sp.
Notes: Rhim is the eldest son of Drurm and is the third in command in this particular clan. He will be very suspicious of outsiders, fearing that they will take over their territory.

DRURM

RHIM

FJOR

RORVEN

GROTEN

TRAUN

FJOR: male, age 125; S:12; I:16; W:11; D:17; CON:13; CH:9(11); N; Thief; HTK7; AC1; 2nd level.
Personality: Sly, cautious, perceptive.
Physical Appearance: Thin.
Carries: Leather armour, dagger and scabbard, short bow and quiver of 9 arrows, 2 darts, thieves' tools, 4gp, 17sp.
Notes: +2 reaction/attacking adjustment. PP:40%; OL:39%; F/RT:25%; MS:26%; HinS:20%; HN:10%; CW:86%; RL:0%.

Fjor is Drurm's second son. He is more likely to join in on any profitable mission suggested by the players than any of the others.

RORVEN: male, age 274; S:13; I:13; W:8; D:10; CON:11; CH:15(17); LN; Fighter; HTK36; AC1; 4th level.
Personality: Hasty, brave, honest.
Physical Appearance: Smart.
Carries: Chainmail armour, shield, hammer, morning star, dagger and scabbard, 7gp, 9sp.
Notes: Rorven is the brother of Drurm and is second in command of this clan.

The other noegyth nibin have no special skills other than those possessed by all such creatures.

GROTEN: male, age 79; N; HTK3; AC3.
Personality: Introverted, calm, practical.
Physical Appearance: Good looking (for a dwarf!)
Carries: Leather armour, spear, 5 darts, hammer, 2gp, 8sp.
Notes: Groten is the son of Rorven. He will have little to do with strangers.

TRAUN: male, age 187; CN; HTK5; AC3.
Personality: Rude, barbaric, callous.
Physical Appearance: Scruffy.
Carries: Spear, 5sp.
Notes: Traun is the brother of Vurn.

VURN: male, age 95; NE; HTK7; AC2.
Personality: Callous, vicious, malevolent.
Physical Appearance: Ordinary.
Carries: Studded leather armour, spear, hammer, 1gp, 4sp.
Notes: Vurn is the brother of Traun. He will be most hostile to strangers.

GRUTHË: male, age 97; CG; HTK4; AC3.
Personality: Good-natured, kind, brave.
Physical Appearance: Ordinary.
Carries: Dagger, spear, 5sp.
Notes: Gruthë is the husband of Yera.

YERA: female, age 89; CG; HTK3; AC3.
Personality: Honest, helpful, industrious.
Physical Appearance: Ordinary.
Carries: Dagger, 4sp.
Notes: Yera is the wife of Gruthë. She is the only female of the clan; the others having been killed or lost on the journey to this home.

The hoard of this clan consists of 1000 platinum pieces, 3000 gold pieces, 8000 silver pieces, and 15 pieces of jewellery worth a total of 900gp. The noegyth nibin will always seek vengeance on those who wrong them, unless this would cause greater losses, in which case they will merely hold a bitter grudge. □

VURN

GRUTHË

YERA

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ARMED TO THE TEETH

by M J Bourne

Although an extensive range of weapons is provided in the *Players Handbook,* some useful or colourful weapons are left out. The following can be used to give more character to your game.

Misericorde
A misericorde is a dagger with a very thin blade, designed specifically to slip through joints or other chinks in thick armour. With the blade being thinner, and therefore needing to be stronger, misericordes are technically more difficult to make than normal daggers, and consequently more expensive. Also, the thin blade limits the disruption of the internal organs. The bonus against heavy armour should only be applied if the user is grappling or has surprised his opponent.

Poniard
A poniard is simply a small misericorde. Its only advantages over its larger brother are that, being smaller, it is lighter and easier to conceal.

Sword-breaker
A thick knife with a series of reversed hooks opposite the cutting edge. Later, more sophisticated models had a type of spring mechanism in the hooks to trap the sword. Then, with a quick flick of the wrist, the blade could be broken or spun out of the opponent's hand. Because this is a short, one-handed weapon, it is more difficult to do than with say, a ranseur. Disarming should be limited to single-handed swords.

Bearded Axe
This is a two-headed axe swung two-handed. It has immense penetrative power, but requires a lot of room to be fully effective.

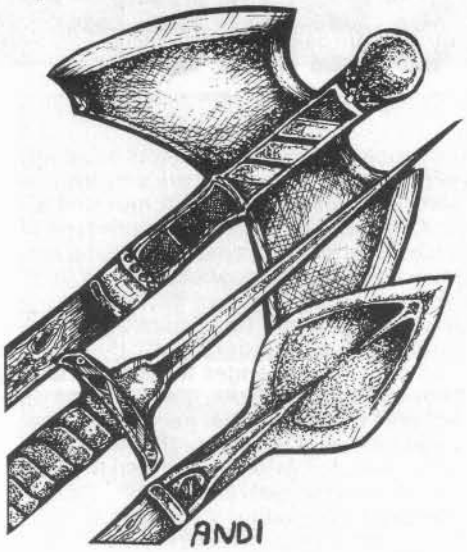
Angon
A heavy Gallic throwing spear with a leaf-shaped point. Basically equivalent to the Roman pilum.

Staff-Sling
Tying a sling to a quarter-staff increases the diameter of the swing circle and consequently increases the force behind the missile, and therefore range and hitting power. The snag is that it needs two hands and more space. Uses the same ammunition as an ordinary sling.

Boomerang
The archetypal Aussie weapon! It actually requires a fair amount of skill and more importantly in a dungeon, space, to get the thing to return. Prevailing wind strength and direction are also important. It is effective against low ACs, but has little else to recommend it.

Blowpipe
In terms of effectiveness, see boomerang (above). Can be very dangerous in the hands of people prepared to use poison. Both blowpipe and darts are relatively simple instruments, and DMs may waive any cost. Otherwise cost at 5cp each. Two hands are needed to fire a blowpipe accurately.

Quicklime
An early form of chemical warfare! The lime was very finely powdered and when



the flask was smashed would shoot out to form a heavy suspension, irritating the lungs and eyes. Creatures that can be affected must make a saving throw against poison or be helpless with spluttering and coughing for 2-5 rounds. Hitting and flask-breaking probabilities are the same as for oil-flasks. Dungeoneers will find it useful in slowing down pursuing monsters, and that it is probably best to smash it against the roof.

Soft-Soap
Appears to have mostly been used in sea-fights where the soap was tipped on the decks of ships to prevent enemy sailors keeping on their feet. Effect is very much at the DM's discretion, and also the nature of the surface. Perhaps a saving throw against dragon's breath to avoid slipping, for all passing through the affected area, with the following additions and subtractions.

+/−	Dexterity bonus	−1	if rough cut stone
+1	per flask above the first	−2	if natural stone formation
+1	if very smooth surface	−3	if especially jagged

Pavise
A pavise is a shield-like cover propped up by a pole and used by archers assaulting castles. However it can have other uses too. Pavises are large and bulky, but provide good cover, counting as a shield against missile fire if the user is firing, and as complete protection against normal missiles if the user is hiding behind it. □

Weapon	Cost	Usable by
Misericorde	3gp	Any but Clerics
Poniard	3gp	Any but Clerics
Sword-breaker	20gp	Any but Clerics
Bearded Axe	10gp	Fighters*, Assassins
Angon	30sp	Fighters*, Assassins, Druids
Staff-Sling	1gp	Fighters*, Assassins, Druids, Thieves, Monks
Boomerang	10sp	Fighters*, Assassins, Druids, Monks
Blowpipe	9sp	Any but Magic-Users** and Clerics
Flask of Quicklime	2gp	Any but Monks***
Flask of Soft-Soap	2gp	Any but Monks
Pavise	16gp	Any but Magic-users**, Thieves, Monks

* Including Paladins and Rangers
** Including Illusionists
*** And Clerics at DM's discretion

Weapon	Weight	Damage S/M	Damage L	Length	Space Required	Speed Factor
Misericorde	7	1-3	1-2	c1'	1'	2
Poniard	5	1-2	1	c8"	1'	1
Sword-breaker	20	1-4	1-4	c15"	1'	3
Bearded Axe	100	1-10	1-12	c4'	5'	9
Angon	60	2-5	2-7	6-7'	1'	7
Staff-Sling	30	3-6/2-5*	3-8/2-5*	3-5'	5'	7
Boomerang	20	1-6	1-4	c2'	2'	3
Quicklime	10	Special	Special	2'	2'	1**
Soft-Soap	10	Special	Special	2'	2'	1**
Pavise	150	–	–	–	4'	–

* Bullet/stone.
** Providing flask is pre-weakened.

Weapon AC	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Misericorde	−4/+1	−4/+1	−3/+1	−3/+1	−1/+1	0	0	0	+1
Poniard	−4/+1	−4/+1	−3/+1	−3/+1	−1/+1	0	0	0	+1
Sword-breaker*	−3	−3	−2	−1	0	0	+1	+1	+3
Angon**	−2	−2	−1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bearded Axe	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	0	0

* Disarms sword on score to hit AC6.
** Double damage if fixed to meet charge.

Missile Weapons	Fire Rate	Range S	Range M	Range L	AC 2	AC 3	AC 4	AC 5	AC 6	AC 7	AC 8	AC 9	AC 10
Angon	1	1	2	3	−3	−2	−2	−1	−1	0	0	0	0
S/S Bullet	1	8	12	22	−1	−1	0	0	0	+1	+3	+1	+4
S/S Stone	1	7	11	18	−5	−3	−1	0	0	+1	+3	+1	+4
Boomerang	1	1	2	3	−6	−4	−2	−2	−1	−1	−1	−1	+1
Blowpipe	1	1	2	4	−9	−7	−3	−1	0	0	+1	+4	+4

Tabletop Heroes *is a regular department covering figures, modelling and painting tips by Joe Dever and Gary Chalk.*

HORSE SENSE

Painting miniature horses to achieve a realistic effect is a relatively simple process, but one that often eludes the beginner, and indeed the experienced painter, owing to a lack of basic information about horses. This month, together with a basic guide to colours, we will outline a few simple techniques that can be used to good effect.

There are three basic colours of horses: grey, black and brown. Grey horses vary from very light grey dappled through to almost black, with white horses (technically 'greys') an extreme rarity. Dark greys are often dappled with lighter tones and vice versa, and many have cream-coloured manes and tails in contrast to the usual blue-grey or black. The undersides of greys are lighter than their flanks or haunches, and sometimes creamy (*Humbrol* MC4 with a little MC25 is an effective mix). A pure black horse is as rare as a pure white horse. The colour should be very dark brown (*Humbrol* M33 mixed 50/50 with MC6) with highlights of burnt sienna (try *Humbrol* MC22 or HN5) and shading of a blue/black mix (MC33 with a little MC8). Manes and tails should be black, with a thin wash of blue/black shading mix applied once the base coat has dried. Brown is the most common colour of horse, of which there are two main distinctions – chestnuts and bays. Chestnuts have a tail and mane that is often the same colour as their coat, otherwise it is dark brown (but never black) or creamy fawn. Bays always have black manes and tails, and the dappled effect of a different shade of brown usually appears on their flanks and haunches. Horses' eyes are very dark, with no white visible at all. A hint of pink/grey around the eye is all that is needed. In most cases, this pink/grey mix can also be used for the hairless areas of a horses' muzzle – around the nose and lips. Greys often have pink patches of skin that cover the whole nose, whereas bays have a much darker pink/grey skin (darker than chestnuts). This muzzle colour should always be blended into the body colour. Many horses have what are known as 'stockings' or 'socks' – areas of lighter colour that affect one or more of their legs. There are no rules governing these socks and stockings; they can spread at differing lengths from the hoof upwards and affect any or all of the legs. However, the horny part of the hoof will be light coloured if there is a light sock and vice versa (although hooves are never black).

Horse Painting Techniques

Dry-Brushing. After undercoating in matt white, paint your horse either black or dark brown. Once dry, apply a lighter shade of brown (or grey if you wish to depict a grey horse) by dry-brushing (see *TTH WD61*, for technique). Manes and tails are tackled after the body has dried, but the process is identical. For a guide to which colours to use consult the chart below. All bridles, reins and saddlery are added once the 'horse-flesh' is finished. Dry-brushing is a fast method of painting horses, ideally suited to 'mass-production'. It does, however, give a dark appearance to the horse.

Oils. For those of you who have the patience of a saint, the effects achieved with the use of oil paints are very impressive, giving a richness of colour that is difficult to obtain with any other type of paint. Firstly, undercoat your model and then apply a base coat of matt tan, rust red or orange (*Humbrol* MC1). After leaving this to dry (minimum 24 hours), apply your oil colour (slightly thinned) and blend any changes together while they are still wet. Now, using a piece of lint-free cloth or tissue, gently wipe the raised areas of the figure (flanks, haunches, fronts of legs, chest) to allow the undercoat to show through. This creates a very subtle shading that combines with the warmth of the oil colour and the basic undercoat beneath. This technique is not easy and requires much trial and error in order that it may be mastered. Oil paints dry slowly and this method is only really recommended for the patient!

Washing. This is perhaps the easiest and quickest way of painting horses. Firstly, dilute your basic colour and apply it to your undercoated model using a fairly large brush (Size 4 is recommended). Any variations of colour should be blended together while the paint is still wet. The wash will run into the indentations of the model and create a realistic muscle tone, forming the basis to which extra shading can be applied. Manes and tails are completed once the body has dried, followed by saddlery.

When painting 'greys', it is advisable to give your model two undercoats of matt white. Once dry, shade all the recessed areas with pale grey try (*Humbrol* MC4) and then thin down this colour and work it into the lower legs, flanks and rump, taking care to leave no discernible line between the lighter and darker tones. When this has dried, take a little matt white and dot the flanks and rump to give them the distinctive dappled effect. The more dramatic the effect you require, the darker your grey shading should be.

When you come to varnish your figure, a silky finish is best (*Humbrol* Satin Varnish 135), but it should be borne in mind that the sheen of a horses' coat is not uniform in nature. The underparts are always less shiny than the back, haunches and neck, and a grey horse is far less shiny than a black or brown.

This Issue's Photos

Fig 1 shows three of *Citadel's* new elven horses which were painted using the wash techniques described in the text. All saddlery and trappings were completed after the body of the horse.

Figs 2-6 illustrate the *Cthulhu* adventurers from the *Grenadier* boxed set of the same name (*6501*). They accompany the *Creatures Set* that was featured in last month's photo page, and are available from *Games of Liverpool* at £8.95 per box.

In *Fig 7* we see *Citadel's* new burglar complete with grapnel and rope, and an addition to their *CO1* range of fighters. These particular figures are ideally suited to simple conversion; the grapnel can be cut away from the burglar to leave a rope-carrying NPC, the scabbard of the fighter can be shortened to leave a dagger rather than a sword.

Fig 8 shows an armoured knight from the *Essex* range of Medievals, together with a *Citadel* longbowman from their *Fantasy Men At Arms* range (*C26*). Many of the *Essex* mounted knights are also available as foot figures.

In *Fig 9* we have *Citadel's* Undead Rider. This model was completely dry-brushed in a mix of suitably 'unnatural' colours that befit this undead mount.

In *Fig 10*, a close-up look at *Ral Patha's* Elven Hero, designed by Tom Meier, shows the effect of dry-brushing in detail. Generally, wash techniques produce a more subtle rendering of light and shade, but this distinction is simply a matter of personal taste. □

HORSE PAINTING GUIDE

TYPE	COLOURS
Light Bay*	Body reddish-brown. Mane, tail and legs below the knee black.
Dark Bay*	Body dark brown, otherwise as light bay.
Light Chestnut*	Body yellow-brown or reddish-brown (more usual) and legs of the same colour. Mane and tail a bit lighter.
Liver Chestnut*	Body dark brown and legs similar. Mane and tail a yellow-brown or reddish-brown
Brown*	Very dark brown. Nose brown.
Grey*	Off-white or cream with grey dapple, mostly neck and flanks, varying in degree from horse to horse. Legs below the knee grey. Mane and tail grey or white.
Blue Roan*	Grey with black dapple. Mane and tail black. Legs below the knee black or very dark grey.
Black*	Very dark brown all over.
White	Off-white all over (use creams and pale greys as contrasts).
Dun	Dun body, black legs, mane and tail and stripe spine (mainly a pony colour).
Piebald	White, with irregular patches of black. Mane tail are the same colour as the adjacent portion of neck or rump.
Skewbald	As piebald, but reddish-brown or dark-brown over white.
Strawberry Roan	Reddish-brown dappled with grey, maximum grey on upper surfaces. Legs dark brown, mane and tail grey.

* All horses marked thus are liable to have white markings on face and legs below ankle. The face marking, called a 'blaze', can be large or small. Very few horses have no blaze, likewise few have no 'socks'.

Fig 1

Photographs by Joe Dever and Gary Chalk. Painting in Figs 2-7, 9 by Jim Hall. Painting Guide reproduced by kind permission of Patrick Stephens Ltd. (From 'Napoleon's Campaigns in Miniature' by Bruce Quarrie.)

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

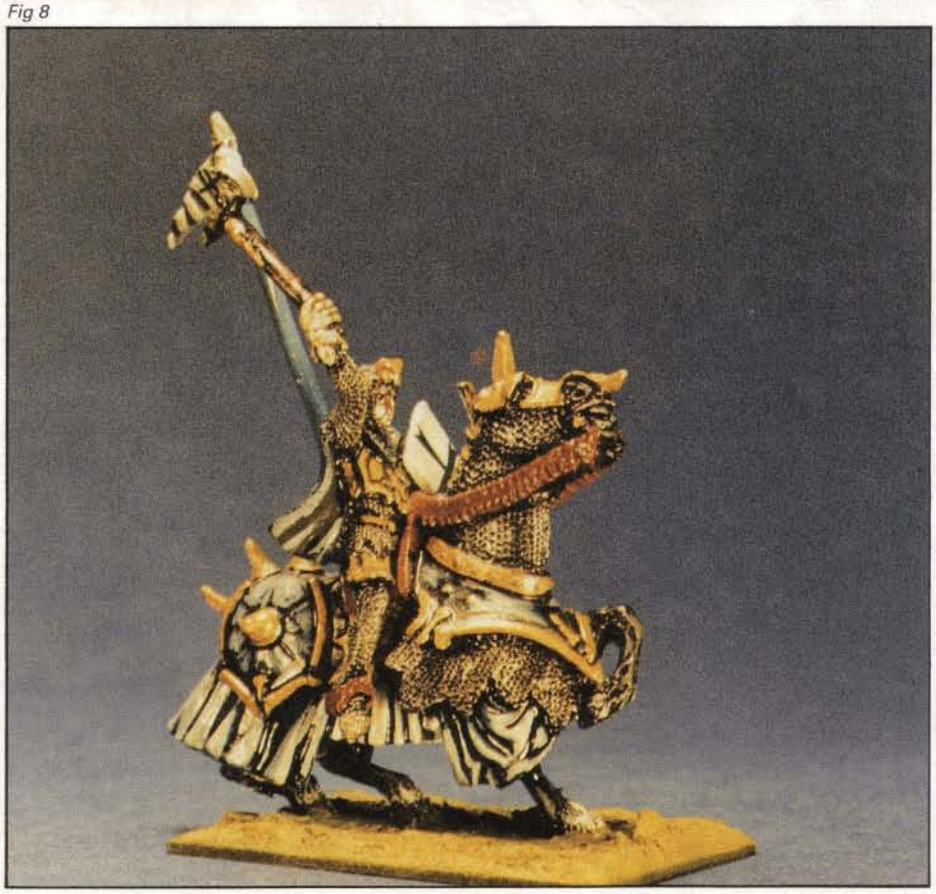


Fig 9

Fig 10

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GAMES WORKSHOP - THE SPECIALISTS

IF WE DON'T HAVE IT.....THEN YOU PROBABLY DON'T **NEED** IT!!

IN BRIEF

The Lost Shrine of Kasar-Khan second in *Integrated Games Complete Dungeon Master* series should be available by now, retailing at £4.95.

Citadel's open day last month attracted 1500 people, and proved to be even more popular than last year's event.

FASA's Dr Who RPG is now nearing completion, we have just seen a pre-production copy and will give a full report next month.

Sleuth are soon to release *Gumshoe*, a boxed *Consulting Detective* style 1930's private-eye game set in San Francisco.

John Maitland, *Standard Games* leading light, has left the company and joined *Avalon Hill UK's* sales team.

Dungeon Floor Plans V by *Games Workshop* will include external street scenes for the 1920's to the present day. It will be designed for use with *Call of Cthulhu* and superhero games.

Warhammer Role-Playing's first draft is completed – and looks to be a very interesting adaption of the *Warhammer Battle Rules* system. The initial package itself will be very comprehensive. Further add-ons are expected including a campaign world (as mentioned in last issue's *Newsboard*).

APOLOGY!

In last issue's *Star Trek* ad we unfortunately listed WHIMZ as being in London SW1 – The *real* address is in fact: WHIMZ, 56 Battersea Rise, South Circular Road, SW11. Tel: 01-228 1343. They have one of the finest selections of role-playing games and accessories south of the River Thames!

TREASURE CHEST COMPETITION

By the closing date nearly a hundred entries had arrived here at *White Dwarf*. We will be working our way through them over the next few weeks. Many thanks to all entrants. Watch out for the next prize competition in a couple of issues.

STARFLEET COMMAND

The last *Star Trek* episode was made in 1969, although its mass popularity began in the 1970's. Starfleet Command is the revitalised *Star Trek* fan club that was started in 1975, but folded in 1983. Now it is flourishing with 400 members worldwide. Each member has an official Starfleet rank and posting, either in an outpost, station, starbase, or starship depending on how many members live in their area. They dedicate their organisation to science fiction and space exploration. The fees are $6 per year or $75 for life. You can get more information from: Admiral Ronald L Lingham, Chief of Operations, Starfleet Command, c/o 23 St Chads Road, Blackpool FY1 6BP or FADM, John Wetsch, Chief of Staff, 1012 Northwestern Drive, Grand Forkes, ND58201, USA.

At the moment Starfleet is fighting off a Klingon invasion, so they would welcome any new personnel.

LIVE ROLE-PLAYING EXPLOSION

Live role-playing is set to really take off this year with three major holiday schemes available.

Dolphin Holidays have splashed their holiday across the Sunday supplements over the last few months. *Forest of Doom* differs considerably from the traditional *Treasure Trap* approach, making the use of video, lighting, sound, make-up and a range of other drama and stage equipment. The holiday caters for the 8-13 age group. *Dolphin* are a full-time professional holiday company.

Treasure Trap makes its move this year from the fairy-tale castle at Peckforton to the twenty-two mile cavern complex of Chislehurst Caves in Kent.

The latest group to enter the field is *Time Scape*, headed by Dave Hewitt, ex-consultant at *Treasure Trap* and devisor of their holiday scheme. Dave, an accountant and systems analyst by day, has been making use of his considerable role-playing experience to aid local councillors training throughout the UK. John Middleton, who designed the *Treasure Trap* overland adventures is also involved together with Gary 'Slim' Parsons, an ex-*Asgard* employee. The scheme is running for ten weeks throughout the summer for players aged 13 and up.

The interesting aspect is the difference in facilities when the visitor is 'out of character', *Dolphin* and *Time Scape* provide all the creature comforts, but *Treasure Trap* is much more rough and ready – many people like it this way!

TASKS OF TANTALON

Having seen a pre-release copy of the Steve Jackson *PuzzleQuest* book (£5.95) I can now report that it is a very handsome volume. Very well illustrated with intriguing puzzles, it is not strictly in the fantasy combat style of other gamebooks, but does have its own distinct flavour. It took us quite a time to crack the puzzles. The answer is . . .

NEXT ISSUE

The Philosopher's Stone – an alchemical AD&D scenario.
The Horse of the Invisible – a supernatural adventure for Call of Cthulhu.
The Road Goes Ever On – a look inside Middle Earth Role-Playing
Ambush! – a surprise feature for Warhammer.
Plus all the regular features and departments.

THE DARK EYE AND DRAGON WARRIORS

Corgi Books are set to launch themselves fully into the RPG field this year with no less than two new games. *The Dark Eye*, translated from the German, has been outselling *Dungeons & Dragons* four times over in Germany during the past year. More details on this when we have it, there will be a considerable number of scenarios and add-ons available in due course.

Two *White Dwarf* 'old boys', Dave Morris and Oliver Johnson, have written the first of three titles of their *Dragon Warriors* role-playing system. Each book will retail at £1.75, and includes character generation and combat systems which they claim only take ten minutes to master. Every book also has a scenario, which does not need all the books to play.

New Ninja and Time Travel Gamebooks

Jamie Thomson (ex-assistant editor of *White Dwarf*) and Mark Smith, authors of *Talisman of Death* have two new series of gamebooks coming out in June/July. The *Ninja* books (*Hodder and Stoughton*) are set in the world of Orb. *Avenger* and *Assassin*, the first two, are illustrated by Bob Harvey. Particularly interesting is the combat system which allows you to choose from a selection of martial arts attacks.

Their second series is set in 3033 with the player as a member of the Time Police charged to defend time from those who would seek to meddle in it. Initially there are four titles (by *Sphere*): *The Renegade Lord* (a computer version will be available from *Mastertronic* but will have a slightly different story), *Mechanon*, *The Rack of Baal*, and *Lost in Time*. Illustrated by Geoff Senior (who did *Space Assassin*) and technical equipment by Nic Weeks (*White Dwarf* regular).

The *Ninja* book series will have at least three titles, and the *Time Police* six. More details soon.

STOP PRESS.STOP PRESS.STOP PR

E Gary Gygax co-originator of *Dungeons & Dragons* has finally succumbed to the lure of solo gamebooks. Using a new role-playing system apparently designed by his brother, he has written the first three of a series with Flint Dille (who owns the rights to *Buck Rodgers*). The series will be called *The Sagard Series*, printed by *Corgi*, and will be out in the UK around Xmas. Back in the USA Gary Gygax seems to be back at the helm of *TSR* after a period of boardroom shuffles.

GOBBLEDIGOOK by Bil

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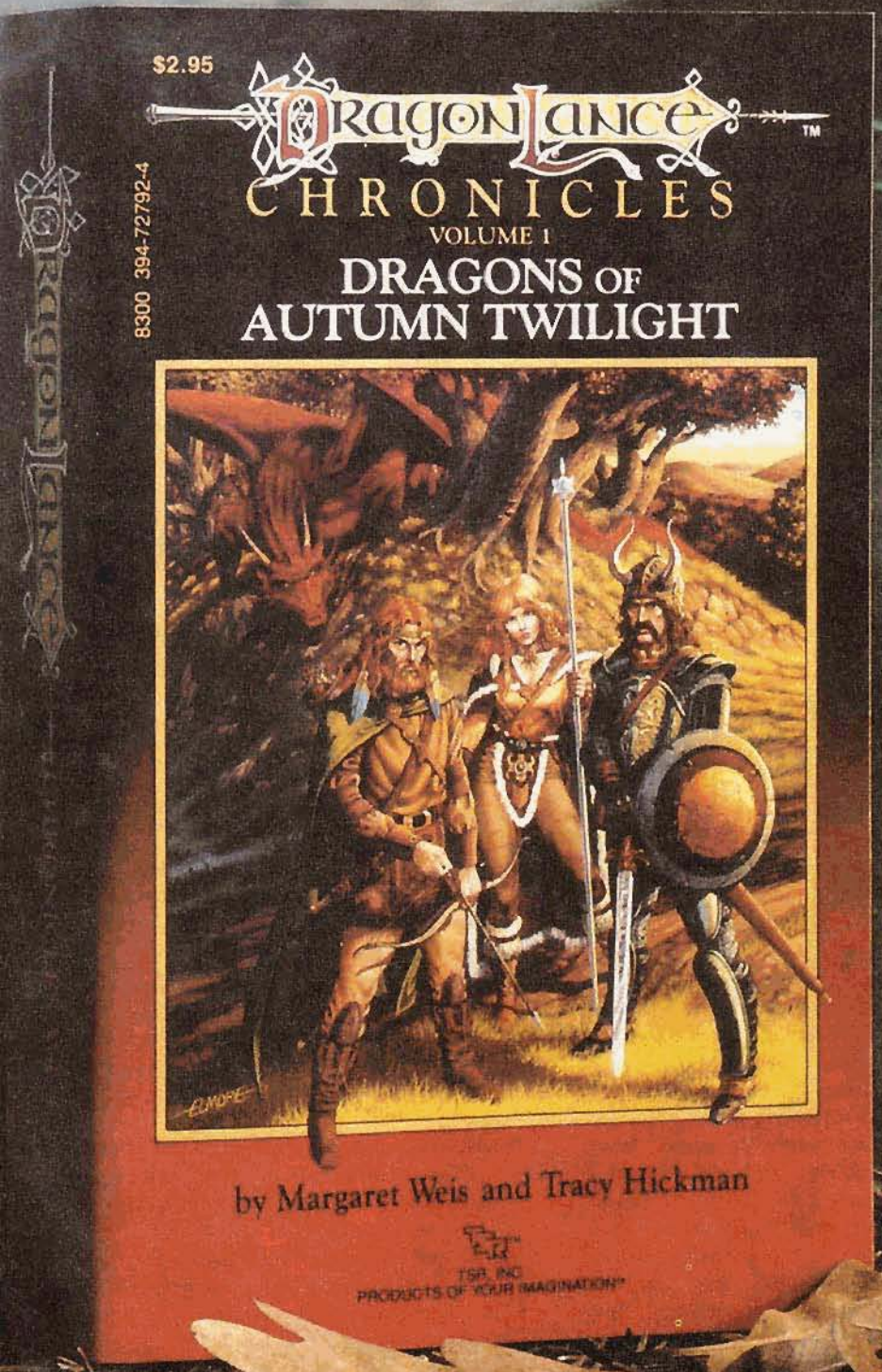

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DRAGONMEET
Competition & Demonstration Organisers Wanted!
We urgently need people, clubs and helpers at our *Dragonmeet* convention, to be held at Central Hall, Westminster on Saturday 25th May 1985. If you, or your club, would be interested in staging a demonstration or competition game at *Dragonmeet* please write, giving full details of your proposed event (plus any special requirements) to: *Dragonmeet Events, Games Workshop Ltd*, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10.

GAMES DAY '85
Horticultural Hall, Sept 28-29
Clubs, Groups, Players, etc. If you have a fantasy, war, computer, board or even outrageous games that you would like to run at *Games Day*, please write now with details of your proposed event and any special requirements for early allocation of space. We also need gophers to help on the admin side (London residents only please). Please write to: *Games Day, Games Workshop Ltd*, 27/29 Sunbeam Road, London NW10.

HTK. Fanzine for all RPGs. Price 40p. From: *HTK*, 20 Hamble Road, Merryhill, Wolverhampton.

SANIO - The Fantasy PBM. This game has now been running successfully for over five months and is busy trying to find new players to populate its now expanded map. Over 100 creatures and 30 herbs have been created and many towns and ruins. Any person stating that he saw this ad in *White Dwarf* will receive two free returns and the first four will receive six free. Apply for free rule book and start up to: *Lorewarden Games*, 23 Breckhill Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham.

Metal to Monster. Lead figures painted very cheap. ☎ 061 724 9048.

Quality Painting Service for fantasy figures. Send SAE and figure for free sample painting and price list. M Lyons, 75 Belvedere Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield, Wigan WN4 8RX.

For Sale. *DMG, PH, DDG, MM, MM2* - £5 each. *AD&D* modules, *U1, A3, A4, S2, S3*, £1 each. *Grimtooths Traps*, £1. ☎ (0532) 406057.

Starquester 2. Want to know about FRP werewolves, *Traveller* entertainments, 1985 *CoC, Bushido* Yakuza, and have *RQ, Laserburn* and *Star Trek* adventures for 60p? SAE to: Mark Oswin, 103 Church Lane, Backwell, Bristol, Avon.

DEATH is a fantasy postal campaign including over 100 tribes of 10 different races. If you would like to participate and rule over a tribe and gain power, contact the following for details and free Death rules: S Jones, 64 Hoole Lane, Chester, Cheshire CH2 3DS.

For Sale. *White Dwarf 1-30*. Good condition. Offers. Allan, ☎ (0632) 543654.

Flornandor. A land where chaos is the accepted norm, creatures of evil roam the earth. A land which is lawless, where only brave men and women can help prevent any further decline. This is the age of the Warrior, Wizard, Priest and Robber. Where only the fittest will survive. For further information on this PBM write to: D M Cooksey, 2 Pemerton Road, Basingstoke, Hants RG21 2LW.

For Sale. *DMG, FF, MM, PHB*, many modules, *City of Sorcerers*, vgc. £90 ono (worth £140). Will split. Good as new. *SPI's Middle Earth* £12, *Warhammer* £5, *Bush* 6290 stereo cassette/radio £40. Patrick, ☎ (0279) 731277.

Sale. *Warhammer 1*, £4.30, *T&T* boxed, £7, *Pro-tennis, Speed Circuit*, £11 each (ex cond), *Judge Dredd*, £6.20 (as opened). Selection of *Spectrum* software *originals*. SAE for list. R Lewis, 32 Sullivan Circle, Newport, Gwent NP9 9RG.

Have Wyrms Footnotes 9 and 10, will exchange for others. Also wanted *Different Worlds*. Chris ☎ (0264) 51543 (after 7pm).

Castle Plan. Send £1 for this detailed plan of The Castle Dresmir. Suitable for many adventures to be designed around it. Andrew Race, 21 Lansdowne Crescent, Darton, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 5PW.

For Sale. *RQ Companion*, £5, *Broken Tree Inn*, £2, *Foes*, £8, *Big Rubble*, £10, *Borderlands*, £10, ono. All in very good condition. Rod, ☎ (0502) 518340.

For Sale. *Call of Cthulhu* and modules, £13, *Privateers & Gentlemen* and modules, £12, *Game of Nations*, £6. ☎ Wells 73212.

The Fiery Cross. Fantasy role-playing fanzine now reaches issue four. Annual subs for six 40-page, A5 issues, £3; four issues, £2. Copy of issue 4 only, just 60p. All prices include P&P. Write to: Tom Stacey, The Mill House, Hawridge, Nr Chesham, Bucks. All previously unpublished articles and artwork welcomed.

25mm Miniature Wargame, 7-page rule booklet, including magic, melee, missile combat, etc. (Any number of figures). Send £1.50 and large SAE to: Steven Black, 12 Mayburn Loan, Loanhead, Midlothian EH20 9EN.

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Wanted. *DMG, PHB, MM* as set. Steve, ☎ 363 0536.

Cthulhu Books Wanted. Will pay £5 for a good condition copy of *Beneath The Moors* by Brian Lumley. Other Cthulhu books wanted too! Carl Ford, 11 Warwick Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. ☎ (01) 894 6869.

Competition City Design. Contact: 81 Halbeath Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 7QZ.

The Butchers have moved. Filthchewer now resides at 455 Loughborough Road, Birstall, Leics. ☎ (0533) 674501. Dave Webster wishes you all a good time. Die scum!

Wanted. Artists for growing fanzine. Free advertising and free copies for artists' efforts. Write to: Andrew Fisher, 2 The Limes, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AY.

Help! Keeper of *CoC* in Leeds area needs players (no experience needed), ages 11 to 14, to play with. Peter, ☎ Leeds 670552. Quickly, before I'm thrown into an asylum!

Darlington Dungeons. I have just moved to Darlington and am looking for players for a continuing campaign. Aged 18+, any sex/race/alignment. I also want to play *Traveller/CoC/Space Opera*, any campaigns out there? Call around or write to: Martin Hair, 38 Fife Road, Darlington, Co Durham.

Chester. Barbarian (13) seeks male, female thieves in Chester. Plays *D&D, Traveller, RQ, Car Wars* and *CoC*. Mike, ☎ Chester 377006.

Help! Very experienced *AD&D* player (18) seeks established campaign in SE Kent. Very willing to travel. Contact: Dave Finn, 139 Crabble Hill, Dover. ☎ (0304) 824230.

Announcement. The Association for Role-Playing Fanzines has opened to all fanzine editors. For further information write to: 53 Parolles Road, Archway, London N19 3RE.

Penpal. Australian male, referees *AD&D, Traveller*, seeks English penpal for the exchange of tricks, tips and trivia, preferably *AD&D* DM. Write to: Bradley Tate, 85A Arthuer Street, Woody Point, QLD 4019, Australia.

Cardiff group seeks mature male/female players. *RQ3, Traveller, Stormbringer, Star Trek, T&T, MSPE, CoC, TMP*. Contact: Diane and Richard John, GFF 146 Corporation Road, Grangetown, Cardiff.

Basingstoke. Fellow adventurers wanted to join/start *AD&D* club. Experience not essential, any age considered. Probably a weekly meeting. Contact: Dave, ☎ Basingstoke 473654.

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Want To Be Assassinated? Players of around 15 yrs wanted for *Killer* live role-playing game in and around Benllech, Anglesey. Contact: Jeremy 'Godfather' Gross, Cartrefle, Llanbedrgoch, Anglesey, Gwynedd. ☎ Pentraeth 270. PS No letterbombs (yet)!

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Keen FRPer (17) seeks other players/group in mid-Surrey (Leatherhead/Dorking) area. Contact Anthony Brewer, ☎ (0372) 56421 (after 5pm, weekdays). Will learn any game.

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Wanted. GC *RQ* boxed set. I'll swap *Starter Traveller* (vgc) and 23 *Traveller* figures for it. Nick, ☎ Salisbury (0722) 25453 (after 5.30pm).

Peterborough Games Club. Club starting in Peterborough. If you are interested in your hobby and have nobody to play, ☎ 237666. No matter if you're a beginner or expert, no matter what system, you're welcome to join.

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Wanted. Any *RQ* material, especially *Pavis, Griffin Mountain, Borderlands*. Good condition not essential. John Woods, 49 Pinevale Crescent, Bournemouth BH10 6BG.

East Cleveland. Anyone willing to set up RPG club in area? Also to instruct learner about RPGs. Ian Pearson (15), 5 Darlington Terrace, Staithes, Saltburn, Cleveland TS13 5DJ.

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Wantage. *AD&D* DM seeks players aged 18+ in Wantage area. Contact Colin: ☎ Abingdon 21288 extn 363 (daytime) or at 30 Fawley Close, Wantage, Oxon.

Wanted. *Pavis, Griffin Mountain, Cults of Terror*. Tristan, ☎ Hebden Bridge (0422) 843158.

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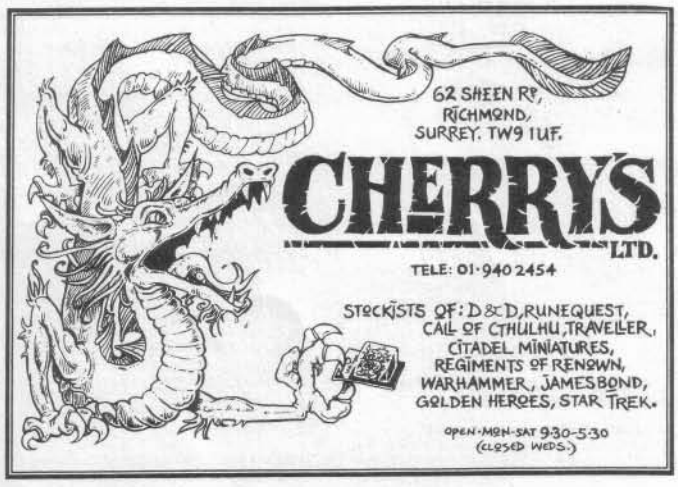

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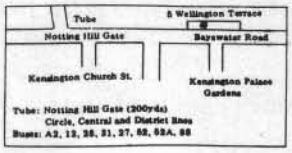

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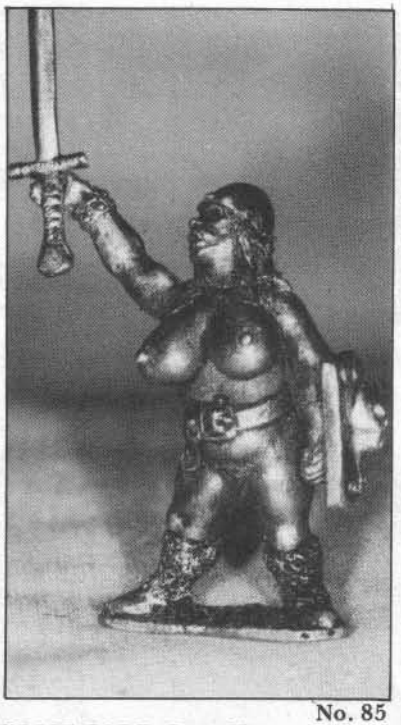

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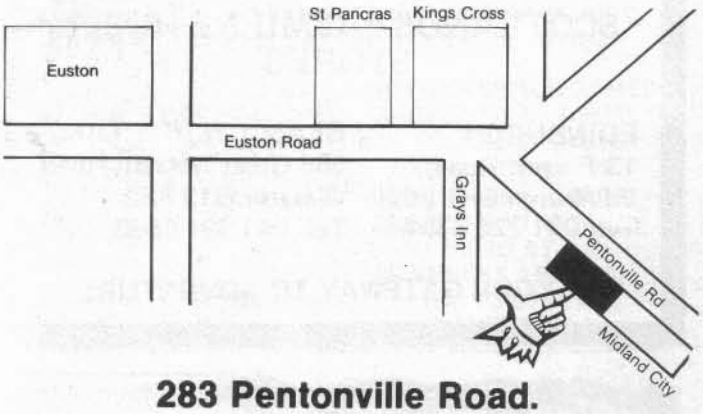

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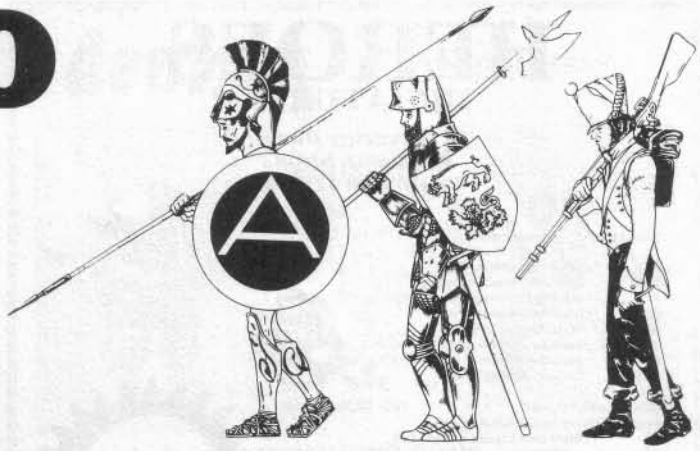

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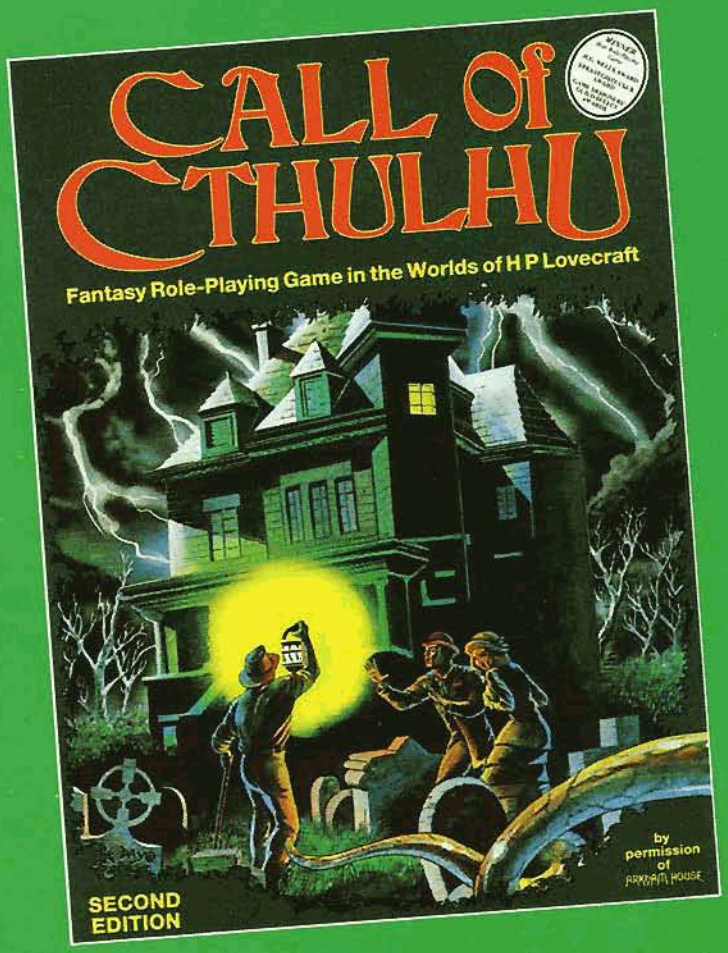

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